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Pinx. Benton Fletcher.

A MOSQUE IN THE BAZAR OF TUNIS.

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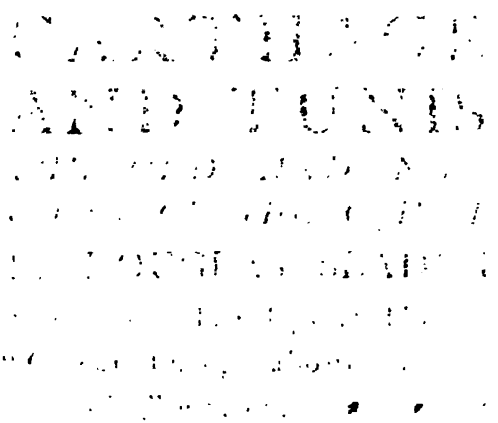

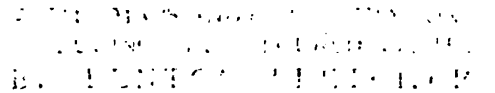

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CARTHAGE AND TUNIS

THE OLD AND NEW GATES OF THE ORIENT

By DOUGLAS SLADEN

Author of "The Japs at Home," "Queer Things about Japan," "In Sicily," etc., etc.

WITH 6 MAPS AND 68 ILLUSTRATIONS
INCLUDING SIX COLOURED PLATES
By BENTON FLETCHER

Vol. II

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TUNIS

WHAT I SAW IN TUNIS

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CHAPTER I

ENTERING THE GATES OF THE ORIENT

YOU can see Carthage from Tunis, and it is miraculous how you can see Carthage in Tunis —Carthage, Rome, Athens, and Jerusalem. I have been visiting Italy and studying beauty for twenty years; I have spent six winters in Sicily; but never until I went to Tunis did I realise how men looked in the ancient world, when Carthage was the Gate of the Orient—Carthage, whose Pompeii-like ruins, and museum of Punic arms and ornaments and terra-cottas, and noble Punic tombs lie round the spot where St. Louis fell, a bare ten miles from Tunis.

The cities it was easy to picture as far as walls and houses went, for architecture can be almost as eternal as the rocks on which it stands, unless the hand of man which raised it up hurls it down. But somehow it was difficult to picture men in classic robes of many colours, with bare legs and feet, the children of the sun.

You know you are at the Gate of the Orient the moment you have passed up the flamingo-haunted

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lake of Tunis, whose fishermen's barques, with their ruddy, painted sails, look like flamingoes themselves; for while you are warping into the quay, you see Arabs and Berbers of every degree watching you.

The wealthy group, in spotless burnouses of the most delicate light colours, hanging negligently in graceful folds, will be coming to meet some fellow-countryman returning from France or Sicily, or more likely some European with whom they have business, and to whom they wish to be complimentary. The more numerous Arabs and Jews, wearing fine blue-cloth suits, with their zouaves and baggy riding-breeches heavily braided with black, are dragomen and others whose business leads them where ships come in. The brawny Arabs and Berbers and Negroes, with their bronze or ebony flesh showing out of Eastern garments of mysterious fabrics and Oriental hues, look at one moment as if the whole history of the world had passed before their eyes but had not been worthy of their notice, and at the next are gesticulating for the first chance of making a franc out of carrying your baggage.

These porters are willing to work for fabulously little, if you are aware how little. There is hardly a European on the quay except sailors, and those in authority. The rest form a riot of colour, from which you can draw a robe or face of any possible hue If you are wise, you will let the hotel-conductor

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arrange with porters, carts, and carriages. The hotel-keepers take good care of tourists in Tunis. Being Europeans, their hand is for Europe against Africa.

You and your possessions are lifted into vehicles and swept up to the city. You will not be going anywhere more than a mile from the quays. But though plenty of Arabs drift past you like leaves on a river in autumn, the glamour of the East has suddenly died out: you are passing European hovels and dirty, noisy Italians; you are in Little Sicily, a quarter where the bulk of the sixty thousand Sicilians fill the ground with their loitering bodies, the air with their torturing cries. Whenever walking or talking becomes impossible in Tunis, it is because of Sicilians. But their merits outweigh their faults. If they did not walk so badly and make so much noise, they would be no annoyance to any one but themselves, and their industry and versatility make them most valuable citizens in a community of French masters and idle Arabs.

Commercially, the Sicilians, and their brothers the Maltese, are the backbone of Tunis. They do the hard work of the place, and are content to make their modest fortunes by industry, though they are mighty quick to see the merits of a speculation.

From Little Sicily you pass into Little France, Little Paris—into a big boulevard which seems to have begun at Marseilles and merely been interrupted by

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the sea; a sort of continuation of the Cannebière, with fine cafés briskly patronised by the French, and not a little by the Arabs, with here a theatre, there a cathedral, and a casino in what one might call the Ostend style of architecture, and fine shops and fine arcades. You are surprised at the number of elegant and beautifully dressed Frenchwomen. Dress is the alleviation of exile for the French. The Petit Louvre is a creditable imitation of the mammoth Magasin du Louvre at Paris, which foreigners know so much better than that other Louvre which was quite a city of courtiers under the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Louis, and now seems to be all picture-gallery and basement.

You are even more surprised by the number of Arabs floating like butterflies past you in their delicate butterfly robes. You hardly notice their heads. The red fezes with white turbans wound round them seem as regular as chimney-pot hats in Piccadilly, and their faces are only of two patterns: one, the venerable grey-bearded sheik with well-modelled nose and forehead and pale olive skin; the other, the moustachioed, effeminate male beauty stereotyped in early Victorian illustrations of Irving's *Alhambra*.

Even here, in Little France, away from the cafés, you will see half-a-dozen or a dozen Arabs for one European; but that is nothing to what you will see if you take up your quarters at the Hôtel Eymon,

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formerly Gigino, which fronts the Porte de France on the Arab side. This is the most popular restaurant in the city, and contains a few good bedrooms. Both board and lodging are moderate, and if you stand in the little balcony opening out of the restaurant, you see more Arab life than anywhere else except in the regular Arab streets, in which no Christian could hire a room, if he wanted to.

For the Porte de France is the old sea-gate of the Oriental city, and through it all day, and almost all night, flows a ceaseless stream of Arabs, making their way from the native city to the starting-place of the tramways. The Porte de France itself might be called the Gate of the Orient.

You feel as if you were born again, and this time in the days of Solomon; and you seem as far from the twentieth century as you are from Europe. There are always Europeans in sight, but you do not notice them in watching all these people, who seem to have come out of the Bible, or at least the *Arabian Nights*. Europeans, in their close-fitting coats and trousers, look like skeletons, or the black imps who move about the Japanese stage as prompters, and whom good taste compels you not to notice, because they are supposed to be invisible. They are lost among the lithe or portly figures whose burnouses spread before the breeze. They are only the audience, where the men of the soil are the actors, playing

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their parts with a perfect dramatic instinct. It never occurs to the Oriental that people would rather he did not act. Stage fright or *mauvaise honte* are not known to him; the meanest man has his right to a bit of the stage, and insists on playing his part to the full.

Now let us look at the actors! First there are the well-dressed Arabs, who give the place that aspect. I believe that you see few aristocratic Arabs in Tunis; but the rich young Arabs, wearing brand-new burnouses of any colour on the register of the rainbow, with the insouciance of a freshman in his Varsity gown, look like lordlings. They sail through the Porte de France or stand about the piazza in twos and threes, quite sure of themselves, and they are as decorative as they are Oriental.

The only way the untravelled can form any idea of the colours of their clothes is by looking at the d'oyleys worked in silk crewels by ladies of the harem for the Earl's Court Exhibition. Those pinks, and pale blues, and yellows, and pale greens, and salmons are the ordinary colours of the rich Tunis Arabs' clothes.

Sometimes they use them for breeches and bolero below a burnous of snowy white, which is the proper colour for a burnous in Tunis. Sometimes the burnous itself is made in one of these colours. The fabric, as fine as cotton, is made of wool woven in Manchester, with a guarantee that it shall only be sold in Tunis.

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Their turbans, unless they are entitled to wear green as descendants of the Prophet, are of white, folded round a crimson *chéchia* (fez); and unlike their poorer compatriots, they do not go about bare-legged, with their feet in yellow goat-skin shoes, but wear stockings, often silk, and high-heeled slippers of kid as delicate in colour as their clothes.

These men are sometimes lithe and strikingly handsome, in Beauty-book style; at others they are portly and venerable. They are always dignified and impressive, but an Englishman feels more respect for the poorer Arab of the bare-legged sort, who walks in his enormous shoes, trodden down at the heels, with the majesty of a Red Indian, especially if he has a prophet's beard. These are the men who bring the Bible back to you. Their flowing beards, and flowing white robes, and skinny, sun-burnt legs are patriarchal. When you see a street full of them you know how the streets of Carthage looked, alike in the days of Hannibal and of St. Augustine.

With them properly go the Berbers, who are the Gibeonites of Tunis, and bear the burdens in the heat of the day. Dressed in rough brown camel's-hair clothes with ragged edges, and wearing sacks on their heads to take the place of sunshade and overcoat, they teach you the meaning of sackcloth and ashes. They might be brothers of John the Baptist. Their faces, blackened with the sun, are eloquent of

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suffering and endurance. To-day they are the men who sit outside the market-place to carry parcels for pittances, or bear on their backs, like their forefather Atlas, any burden, even a piano.

These Berbers are a most interesting race. They are the Libyans who tended flocks round the shores of El-Bahira—the lake of Tunis, before Tunis or Carthage was. They are the Liby-Phœnicians, who, mingled with the Carthaginian settlers, gave Carthage its one chance of becoming a solid nation, instead of a Venice, winning and guarding colonies with *condottieri* armies. They are the men who lived on, after Carthage was gone, as the husbandmen of Roman landlords, an invincible, unsympathetic race, not to be weaned from paganism, or later from various heretical *isms*, by a Cyprian or an Augustine, or a decree from sovereign Rome. Always the most numerous race, and not to be daunted, they might have saved Roman Africa from Vandal or Saracen if room had been made for their heresies in the Church of Africa. But the Church of Africa did not know how to temporise, and when the day of reckoning came, the backbone of the population, the sturdy Libyans, were not in the ranks of the defenders.

When you see an old Berber sitting in his rags on the edge of the gutter, waiting to make a few sous as a beast of burden, remember that he comes of a race who withstood the might of Rome

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and Carthage and the eloquence of Augustine. Near these old Berbers will be seen their rivals in carrying parcels, the street Arabs, for whom the name must have been coined, who are always torturing each other or bandying impudence.

Except in the bazars you see few men in the *djebba*, the national costume of Tunis, a sort of dressing-gown of rich crimson and green brocade; but both Jews and Arabs often wear breeches and bolero of blue cloth.

I do not speak of the soldiers in gorgeous uniforms, for although they are often Orientals, they are never Oriental.

It is true that you do not often see camels there, but this is because there are no *fondouks* to stable them in. The heavy traffic of the country does not come so far into the city. Even horse traffic goes no farther than the piazza, just inside the gate, though horses are not prohibited in the bazars; it is simply too inconvenient to use them. Consequently, the piazza and the two long streets leading into it from the Kasbah are like Venice and the old town of Genoa. The whole streets are given up to foot-passengers, sauntering down in little knots. The Arab is fond of this; but, even if he wished to hurry, he could hardly manage it—for these streets are full of Sicilians, the most accomplished loiterers in the universe.

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There are sundry laws which a Jew ought to observe in his dress, and sundry customs which he does observe a good deal; but the stranger can only tell a Jew from an Arab because he looks like a Jew.

In Tunis one sees the most perfect Oriental city west of Egypt, which is clean enough and safe enough for Europeans to examine with ease and pleasure; and here, until the French occupation a quarter of a century ago, was an Eastern empire like Morocco, but distinguished by the civilisedness and correctness of its rulers, who, forgetting the arrogance of their old Corsair days, sat dreading lest they should share the fate of the rulers of Algiers.

The women are far more Oriental than the men. They all adhere to their national costume. A lady hardly ever leaves her house, and in the Medina, the Arab quarter, a man may not go on his house-top, lest he should overlook his neighbour's wife. Not long have the Arab ladies of Tunis been allowed to see a doctor. The highest rank you meet in the streets are the wives of rich tradesmen, splendid patches of Eastern colour, for they wear thick black veils, embroidered with all the colours of a Roman scarf, without eye-holes, over their faces, and they can only see to walk by holding out the bottom in both hands a foot in front of their bodies. As they bear down upon you, like an antique galley with a silken

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sail, you know that you have entered the Gate of the Orient. They, too, are hedged in by conventions, for they may not stop to shop or talk—a prohibition which they, and even ladies, are beginning to defy, when sale days are on at the Petit Louvre. The city Arab women of the lower class are no less Eastern than their sisters. They dress their whole persons in white, and wind a black scarf round their faces, without holes for eyes or mouth, except the chink between two folds.

From a few yards off they look like negresses, a piece of gentle irony, since negresses, like the Bedouins, excuse themselves from veiling. The lower-class Arab woman is really very funny; for though she covers her face so jealously, she thinks nothing of showing her skinny legs as high as her knees, and the effect of the incongruity is heightened, if she is a country-woman, by huge silver anklets.

The Arab women of all degrees, in their outdoor dress, are mere bundles of clothes; but this may be an artifice to conceal their charms, though I doubt it, judging by the Arab women I have seen accidentally or on postcards. Like the Jewesses, they show as much leg as a fowl. You know that you cannot be in a Christian country, or their lords and masters would very soon make them veil their legs and let their faces take their chance—especially those faces.

The Bedouin women are often both graceful and

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beautiful. They, too, are Mahometans, but allow themselves any privileges they fancy. They do not even object to being photographed, if you give them a penny, and they are always ready to enter into conversation with foreigners, males as well as females, and to sell the jewels off their bosoms. They never veil themselves to conceal their figures. Their garment should be blue, and woven in one piece, secured with fibula brooches on their shoulders; but in practice it is generally in two pieces, and follows the fashion plates for Greek goddesses.

The young women are apt to be slender, graceful, and delicately featured, with large, liquid, haunting eyes, and though they are scantily clad, they wear a profusion of jewellery, two or three necklaces, and perhaps two or three bosom-chains, hung in festoons from the shoulder-brooches, and all of them consisting mainly of silver chains and charms, in which bored sticks of coral take a conspicuous place.

The Bedouin women carry their babies slung on their backs like the Japanese, and often flout the traditions of Mahometanism by going about very dirty. But there is one respect in which the Bedouins trespass less frequently than their Arab sisters, in the wearing of silk. That is forbidden by the Koran, though Professor Lapie maintains that the Koran neither prohibits the taking pictures of the human form, nor enjoins the veiling of women, both of which restric-

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tions he considers the outcome of Oriental jealousy, as is the shutting of women in harems. The Bedouins might therefore be considered the truer Mahometans, if it were not for their notorious indifference to religion. They are children of Ishmael in customs as well as appearance.

We have not done with the Orient yet. There are the children of Isaac, the truest inheritors of the Jews of the Bible to be found anywhere. For their first forefathers came to Tunis when Hiram was King of Tyre, or when Dido was Queen of Carthage, followed by other Jews whenever persecution raised her hateful head on the shores of the Mediterranean. Here in Tunis Jews have lived with Canaan all round them for thirty centuries.

And the Tunisian Jew has been singularly tenacious of his customs; he despises the Jews from Italy, called Livornesi, settled at Tunis for a mere century or two. In his dress the Jew differs little from the Arab, since he is no longer compelled to obey sumptuary laws; but the Jewess differs widely. She shows her face, and very often bare arms and throat, and bare feet thrust into clogs, if she be young. Her costume consists of a short muslin dressing-jacket, white satin knickerbockers made like our hunting men's riding-breeches, covered for grand occasions with gold lace, and a sort of bridal veil of thin white silk flung over a steeple-shaped cap of

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gold brocade, which makes her look like the wife of a crusader.

The Jewesses of Tunis are enormously fat—obesity is considered a guarantee of domesticity; but when they are very young, passing from childhood to womanhood, they are often extremely pretty, with their clear skins and high colour and upright figures. As these young creatures play round the paternal doorstep, it is impossible to picture them grown up into the mountains of flesh you see waddling down the streets.

The Jews do not shut their women up. On the contrary, they are fond of inviting strangers into their houses if they have anything worth seeing; but this is seldom, though a few of them have good courtyards, and their balconies are very picturesque when the booths of fresh boughs have been built upon them for the Feast of Tabernacles. But they are nothing to the houses of rich Arabs, such as you get in the old quarter of the Mamelukes who came from Granada. In the Street of the Andalusians, or the Street of the Rich Man, you are back in Granada before King Boabdil fell—nay, you are back in Carthage before Rome conquered.

The road is stone; the walls are stone; the houses tower so high above you that the sun can only enter the street vertically. From the roofs and upper windows of houses like these the Carthaginian women

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Photo by Garrigues, Tunis.

A STREET IN THE QUARTER OF THE RICH ARABS.

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gave the soldiers of Rome a three days' fight over the half-mile from the ports to the citadel.

Sometimes the street goes right through a house by a vaulted way resting on columns and capitals that may have seen Hannibal. But, for the most part, its high blind walls are only broken by antique Moorish portals below, and windows high in the air, guarded by heavy iron grilles to repel intruders, and jealous pierced shutters of *mashrabeyah* work, as if walls had eyes. Shutter and door are painted sea-green. You cannot tell the ages of the portals, but they are very old, old enough to harmonise with the capitals stolen from Carthage. The tracery round the doors is often beautiful; sometimes there is a verse from the Koran, at other times there are only the conventional decorations, which have given us our word "arabesque."

It is not hard to see where the men of Taormina learned the hooded decorations they gave to their old doorways. The doors themselves, that fill the bold and graceful stilted arches, are a delight. They are fashioned of ancient hardwood, and studded with large ornamental nails in lucky patterns, which go back to Punic days. But Charles V., not Carthage, is responsible for them. When he conquered Tunis, the Arabs complained that his soldiers did not respect the sanctity of their homes. The great emperor bade them drive these nails into their doors as a

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sign that under his rule an Arab's house was his castle.

Inside, these great houses of the Medina are just as stately. You enter by a vaulted passage, with stone couches for the watchman, carried on dwarf arches. Just within the door is the chamber where strangers see the master of the house. Then comes the first court, with its arches of black and white marble, its walls inlaid with antique Persian tiles of turquoise-blue arabesques, and its fountain. As in the mansions of the ancient Greeks, the inner courtyard is for the women.

The principal chambers of the house are T-shaped in appearance, but are really only large rectangular rooms with the portion between the three arms of the T walled off for the use of the harem ladies and their attendants. In the main room the master of the house receives his wives. The ceilings are lofty and vaulted, and covered in the best houses with exquisitely-fretted plaster-work—the *plâtre ajouré* of Granada.

The furniture, especially the bed, is richly, often too richly, carved and gilt. The carpet may be worth a thousand pounds, and the room be so choked with *bric-à-brac* that it looks like a curio shop. As the women go out little, they live a great deal in their courtyard, and the flat roof sometimes serves as a street for them to visit the ladies in the adjoin-

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Photo by Garrigues, Tunis.

A BIT LIKE THE ALHAMBRA IN THE DAR-EL-BEY.

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ing houses. They have charmingly arranged observation rooms, where the grated windows through which they peep are surrounded by deep lounges. These rooms are delightful, with their fretted ceilings, and their cool walls and floors covered with old Persian tiles. Through the chinks of the *mashrabeyah* they can see the life in the street below, and often have a fine sea-view across the lake to Carthage.

The palaces of the Bey are naturally the finest of them all. His palace at the Kasbah has a kind of audience-chamber with walls and ceilings worthy of the Alhambra.

The French have a curious indifference to his waste of his subjects' lives. He holds his court once a week, and inflicts more or less arbitrary death sentences, which are carried out without delay at the Bardo. Seeing people hanged at the Bardo is one of the sights which the guides say "no foreigner should miss," but which few foreigners have the bad taste to witness.

The Bardo is very Oriental. Behind a garden where rose-laurels (oleanders) beggar rhododendrons with the wealth of their blossom in May, rises the palace of the Bey, a mixture of cool white villa and yellow ruin. Outside it, any day, you may see a train of camels, and at its back the nomad Bedouin pitches his low, ragged, filthy tent, and plays the shabby sultan over a caravan of women, children, camels,

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donkeys, and dogs—the last an abomination to better Mahometans.

Inside, you pass up the stately Stairway of the Lions through marble courtyards glowing with turquoise tiles into the gaudy splendour of the chambers where the Bey holds his courts of state and justice. They are only fit for a *fainéant* Oriental sovereign, but much of the palace is wisely given up to a museum of Arab life. In this part of the Bardo you can learn more of the life in noble Arab households than in any book.

From the Dar-el-Bey, the palace in Tunis, there is also much to learn, for when you are taken on its terraced roofs to see the view, your eye falls not only on Carthage, and the lake, and the little minarets of five hundred mosques starting from a sheet of yellow roofs, but you have at your feet the Sidi-ben-Arous Mosque, whose graceful minaret is the gem of the bazars.

Now in fanatical Tunis no unbeliever must set foot in any mosque, and even the doorways have screens built inside them to shut out the passing glance. Therefore, it is only from the roof of the Bey's palace that you learn that the buildings of a Tunisian mosque are built round a garden courtyard like a rich man's house. They are, in theory, the houses of their congregations. It is the holiness of the home which must be respected. This bird's-

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eye view of their courtyards shows that they are mere chapels compared to the lordly mosques of Constantinople, graceful patches of colour and fair form to relieve the humble quaintness of the bazars.

This is not the place to describe in detail the far-famed bazars, where the impassive life of the Orient continues a reign begun a dozen centuries ago, when the armies of the Caliphs won Roman Africa for Islam. In tiny recesses off long *souks*, paved with stone, columned from Carthage, and vaulted against the sun, the Arab merchants recline on their counters, with rich wares stuffed into shelves behind them or hung out for view. These portly people, in their quaint Oriental robes, smoke and sleep and reflect—mostly, it is said, on the fall of Granada. They are indifferent as to purchasers, rigid as to prices, and do not deal in curios. But they are the children of the East, unaltered by the Middle Ages, much less by modern times.

Though their shops are small and their wares few, and they sit silent and still, the bazar is full of life and colour, even in the *souks* of Arab trade. The large stocks, and wares to tempt the tourist, the show and clamour of being Oriental, are in the shops of the Jews, who almost drag the passers-by into their Liberty halls. The most picturesque Arab shops are not in the bazar at all, but by the gates—

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outside the Bab-Menara, inside the Bab-Souika. And the humble spread their jumbles on the ground, mostly old iron, such as knives and fetters. Here, too, may be seen the fortune-teller, gathering his divinations from the dust; the snake-charmer, showing nothing but the tameness of his desert cobras; and other honoured quacks. Within a stone's throw of Bab-Souika are cafés like the Halfaouine, centres of wild gaiety when night has fallen in Ramadan. And here you may see East and West, ancient and modern, face to face, when a train of camels stops to let a tram pass.

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CHAPTER II

THE FRENCH AT TUNIS

FRENCH Tunis is one little bit of Paris. It is the Rue Royale, with a few Rue S. Honoré and Rue de Rivoli shops introduced. It too runs down a slope, a broad street with broad pavements, avenued in a sort of way, whose real business cafés and, of course, postcards. The main difference between the Rue Royale and its Tunisian double is that the latter is full of Arabs who remind you of flamingoes, with their thin legs and light, bright burnouses. They are always promenading the Avenue de France, and such as have enough money patronise its cafés a good deal. The cafés are large and fine, worthy of the boulevards of Paris.

They have excellent bands, and sometimes excellent restaurants as well. You see plenty of smart Frenchwomen sitting at them, perhaps because officers, with lovely and extravagant wives, who have outrun the constable, are glad to take a colonial appointment and retrench, perhaps because the Frenchwoman in Tunis regards it as an exile to be gilded with fine clothes,

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and beguiled with the flirtations for which fine clothes are desirable. In any case, though the men, other than officers, are not striking, the women are. They dine at restaurants a good deal, and after dinner patronise the cafés, or one of the shows.

French Tunis has a casino and a couple of theatres; cafés and *brasseries*, which have performances; cinematographs, which do great business among the Arabs; and, of course, clubs. The Casino is in reality an excellent music-hall with the usual casino attractions, such as *petits chevaux*. It is a handsome building in a flamboyant style, which reminds you of the cover of a Christmas number, and is attached to the Tunisia Palace Hotel. It is close to the residence of the Governor of the Regency, which has a fine palm-garden, divided by a dainty sub-tropical garden from the Cathedral. The Cathedral is the architectural counterpart of the Casino, a handsome building, Oriental if not religious in feeling.

French life in Tunis centres round the cafés and restaurants of the Avenue de France in the winter, and round the Casino in the Belvedere in the warm weather. The city Casino is just off the Avenue de France. The Belvedere, described in a separate chapter, is still in the making as regards trees, but has enchanting features. The views, for example, of the Hill of Carthage, with its white cathedral, and of the lake of Tunis, with its Vesuvius beyond, are

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Photo by Garrigues, Tunis.

THE CATHEDRAL OF TUNIS AND AVENUE JULES FERRY.

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delightful, and the cool Belvedere, which gives the park its name, is the most enchanting Moorish summer-house that could be conceived. But the trees that border the admirable roads for driving and cycling, which a Frenchman loves, can only be mentioned for their flowers; they are hardly bigger than shrubs. And this is odd, for all ancient writers describing the environs of Carthage babble of the pleasant groves which surrounded the city. There are a couple of theatres, so the Frenchman has his necessaries of life, his restaurant, his café, his casino, his theatre, and his park to drive in, and a boulevard with some ambitious shops for his promenade. He needs these for his polite intercourse with the charming and elegant women of his own race.

But there are also many Frenchmen who live in Tunis a life which commends itself more to M. Loti than to Mrs. Grundy. Without doubt many of them live in rather an Arab way in their charming Arab houses. I knew, for example, an officer of the Zouaves who had quite an ancient Arab mansion worthy of transplanting whole to the South Kensington Museum. He learned to speak Arabic fluently, studied Arabic institutions and archæology, and lived as nearly as he could in the native way whenever he was off duty.

The French officers at Tunis are as fond of mufti as English officers. They used to come into

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lunch at our hotel in tweed suits and straw hats, which very likely came from England, they looked so like British officers.

If I were asked the most notable feature of Tunis, I should say the good behaviour of the French. The authorities are extremely considerate to the natives, and foreign ladies are hardly ever molested in Tunis. The French officer at Tunis is very different to his Italian neighbour in Sicily. Ogling the pretty daughter or wife of a foreign visitor is as natural to an Italian officer as putting on the fine pale blue cloak which makes him as picturesque as an Arab. None of the ladies we knew were ever followed in the streets of Tunis, and in the hotel the demeanour of the officers was correctness itself. Twenty-two of them sat at the table close to ours, but not once did they allow their eyes to meet those of the ladies. That they examined the party when the ladies were not looking is very likely.

And now as to the French shops, which are mostly in the Avenue de France or the streets leading off it. There are two or three very large stores, like the Grand Magasin du Louvre in Paris; one of them is called the "Petit Louvre," and it quite deserves its name. English ladies in Tunis can buy fairly good French frocks and millinery as cheaply as in Paris.

Most of the shops in the Avenue de France are

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for the fair sex; but certain trades, like that of boot-making, are in the hands of Sicilians, who are difficult to beat for good work and cheapness. Besides the dress shops there is an excellent book-seller named Saliba, and a sprinkling of the shops which appeal mostly to tourists—jewellers and curio-dealers, with the inevitable bazars of cheap turnery and aluminiery and ironmongery.

The grocers affect the Rue d'Italie opposite the market, wishing to catch the eye of the thrifty housekeeper as she goes to buy her day's store of fresh provisions. Felix Potin himself has a shop there, and worthy rivals. They are dearer than English grocers, but very appetising.

The market of Tunis disappointed me. It consists of a quadrangle of rather uninteresting shops round a poor garden, with certain open-air stalls in the middle. Many of the shops in it are kept by Arabs or Sicilians; but the general impression you get from the greengrocers, poulterers, butchers, and fishmongers is that it must be difficult to make meals interesting from such a dull show. Perhaps it is that the French housekeeper is so vigilant that it is no good trying to win her custom by attractiveness. She knows what she wants so well, and her hand would be so heavy if she were deceived, that she could do her shopping blindfolded.

Fronting different sides of the market are the

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huge, admirably conducted post-office, and baths, Turkish and otherwise, arranged round a pretty enough little tropical garden, but disappointing to the imagination, which looks for Arabian Night effects.

Shops are worthier. Near the post-office is one of the jewellers who sells noble Oriental-looking pieces. He is especially affected by Arabs compelled to part with their treasures. He had, when we were there, temptations varying from a necklace of lions' claws in a barbaric setting of gold to large turquoises engraved with texts from the Koran in distant Ispahan.

The brooches and breast-chains at this shop and those in the Avenue de France are very handsome, and even more barbaric than the lion's claws; but they are desperately expensive, though no doubt some bargaining might be done over a very costly piece. One of the jewellers has got even quainter ornaments, for the White Fathers of Carthage have given him the monopoly of selling the Punic jewellery which is not required for the Lavigerie Museum, and have allowed him to copy yet choicer pieces, which could not be sold, like the famous winged lion with the human head, and the Pegasus, and Tanit, and queer Egyptian gods, besides rings and brooches of a Grecian boldness of design and quite a modern spirit. Quantities of Carthaginian jewellery have come to light since the opening up of the Punic tombs of Carthage.

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The shop which attracts most attention in the Avenue de France is the Photographie Garrigues, which has by far the best show of photographs and postcards of Tunis, Carthage, Kairouan, and the other cities of Tunisia. In this book, with the exception of private photographs taken to illustrate special objects by my friends or myself, I have used the Garrigues photographs exclusively. His postcards of Arab life are, I think, the most spirited I have seen anywhere.

Between the Photographie Garrigues and the Porte de France are some Earl's Court adventurers like those who have the largest shop in the bazar. I call them Earl's Court adventurers because they are the counterparts of the people who, at our annual exhibitions, clamour at the passer-by, "Madame or Mees, you wish to buy something? All very sheap?" Carpets are their *pièces de résistance*; silk gauzes covered with spangles are their catchflies; and inside the shops are the usual melancholy procession of d'oyleys embroidered in rainbow silks by the ladies of the harems, and flashy Cloisonné and sham jewels. These people have no conscience, but they will bargain down to "cut prices" with those who know the proper values.

Opposite there are two of the Grands Magasins, whose window landmarks are quart bottles of Eau de Cologne at four francs each, and sun-helmets. I

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know an economical couple who drank water all the way from Marseilles to England, and carried half a gallon of Eau de Cologne in bottles supposed to hold Sauterne. These big stores sell anything and everything. At the door of one of them I saw a significant episode. An Arab bought a bottle of scent. "Was it good?" he asked. The shopman expatiated on its charm, but refused to open it for his customer to see if he liked it. The Arab put the money down and opened it himself. His face changed. It was vile, he said, and wished to have his money back. The shopman refused. The Arab put the bottle down on the counter and went away without scent or money, magnificent in his disdain. The shopman was most distressed. The rules for regulating the relations between the Arabs and the French are probably severe. We did not wait to see the conclusion of the episode. I need not delay over the shops of French Tunis. They are, in a word, good French shops.

On Sunday morning the Avenue de France has a sort of church parade, in which you see very well-turned-out Frenchwomen and all the Frenchmen in Tunis; but the Arabs rather despise it. Every afternoon and evening the Avenue is crowded. All the cafés are full, and round each skirmish African pedlars, kept at foot's length by the vigilant waiters; for residents are much more important than visitors to

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Photo by Garrigues, Tunis.

A STREET ARAB.

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the cafés, and residents do not want to buy postcards and barbers' looking-glasses and base-metal Bedouin breast-ornaments every day.

I imagine these vendors to be mostly African Jews. They often have the appearance of Arabs and Berbers, but they bargain and bargain.

Personally, I could temporise with the stock of almost any street-hawker while I was sipping my coffee, always excepting the men who wanted to sell me mats and table-cloths of the style you meet in the Oriental departments of Hammersmith. They are really German machine-made tapestry, full of tinsel threads. I do not know why they should masquerade as Oriental in the Orient. You can buy them in Bombay or Tunis or Palermo as local colour, and our gallant Tommies brought them home from South Africa.

The most welcome of the hawkers are those who carry fine brass trays something like the fiddles used for keeping the crockery on the table in storms at sea, to sell burnt almonds and fruits preserved in clarified sugar. You have met them in other ports of the Levant—Smyrna, Constantinople, even Venice. They have their rivals, who carry on their heads on bakers' boards fresh macaroons, which are wholly delightful, and sponge cakes, Swiss *meringues*, honey-cakes, and the like, which are less delightful. Beignets always have trays to themselves.

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Café life is life to the Latin nations, and, if it was not for these hawkers and the improvement in climate, you could imagine yourselves in Paris when you sit in the main thoroughfare at Tunis. There were no races when we were there, but even at Nice, the capital of the Riviera, and, after Paris, Lyons, and Marseilles, one of the most important towns in France, the race-course is only in embryo.

Tunis has imports and exports each of about £3,000,000 a year. Her trade is mostly with France, which admits her staple products free of duties, and Algeria. The English houses who once did a big trade in Tunis have practically been taxed out of existence; the Italians, who are accustomed to prohibitive taxes and to eluding them, increase and multiply. The stupidity and disobligingness of small French shopkeepers is very marked when contrasted with the traits of their Italian and Sicilian brothers. Their boorishness is perhaps even more shown up by the charming manners of the more important French shops.

The French in Tunis may be summed up in a sentence by one who goes there. No one but the English traders who have been frozen out of Tunis by unfair French taxation could regard the presence of the French in Tunis as anything but an unmixed blessing.

One other thing remains to be noticed. I know

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of only one French church besides the cathedral in Tunis, but there are a hundred colleges in Tunisia, beginning with great establishments like the Alaoui and Sadiki.

The garrisoning of Tunisia is done by about twenty thousand troops, consisting of Zouaves, Light Infantry, Tirailleurs, Chasseurs d'Afrique, Spahis, Engineers, Artillery, and Gendarmerie. The light regiments are composed of men who are sent to serve in the colonies as a punishment; there are some in every colony.

The Zouaves are a *corps d'élite*. Both the officers and men are all Frenchmen now, although the name is taken from the tribe of Zouawa, from which the first regiment was raised in the time of Louis Philippe. The uniform is a blue zouave with scarlet ornaments, scarlet *pantalons*, and a red fez, to which a white turban is added on Sundays. For many years there have been no natives in the corps, which was the most dreaded of all the French army by the Germans in the war of 1870.

The Tirailleurs, on the other hand, are mostly natives. They wear pale blue zouaves with yellow ornaments, and pale blue *pantalons* with white spats. They also have a red fez on weekdays, and a white turban added on Sundays. They are very good soldiers, very clean in their dress and habits, and the French say that they obey their officers more literally

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than any soldiers in the world. They have often fired on Mahometans. Their spick-and-spanness is the more remarkable because they come of a class which wears such dirty clothes. They can carry heavy burdens very long distances. At night they light enormous fires, and dance and make pantomimes round them, imitating the lions and other animals. These performances are always very shocking, and sometimes the exercises are done naked. As the French officer who has given me this information said to me, "they make Karagous."

The Arabs like soldiering. Far from having compulsory service and feeling aggrieved by it, there are ten of them willing to serve for every one the French require. Both the officers and men of the Tirailleurs are partly French and partly natives. The natives make good officers, and a certain number of them go to France and become Frenchmen and officers in French regiments. Picard, of Dreyfus-case fame, was a lieutenant-colonel of Tirailleurs. When they are marching they like to have a Nouba or Arab orchestra, and the youngest and nicest-looking of them dance for the edification of their comrades, who hump their knapsacks for them.

The Spahis are similar. They wear a red bolero with black embroidery and pale blue *pantalons* under two burnouses, the under white, the upper red. They not only wear a turban, but a *häik*, and a lot of cord

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made of camel's hair wrapped round the head. They are mostly Arabs, like the Tirailleurs.

The Gendarmerie are half of them French gendarmes and half Arab. They wear a black uniform with white embroidery. With them work the Gardiens des Oliviers, who have uniforms something like the English police with Tunisian fezes.

The Beylical army are dressed very like the French Zouaves and Chasseurs d'Afrique. Half of them live out at the Bardo. They consist of cavalry, infantry, and artillery; but these last are only used to fire salutes, when the Bey comes to town, and for gun-fire in Ramadan, when the first gun comes from the Zitouna Mosque (the mosque of the olive trees).

Every Tuesday night the French have a torch-light march through Tunis to commemorate their conquest of the Regency, Tuesday being the day on which the city was entered. The only people who notice it much are the foreigners in the hotels, who are much gratified by the blare of brass and the glare of torches, and always mistake the French troops who are performing this exercise for a carnival party of the Beylical army.

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CHAPTER III

HOTELS AND THEIR ARAB SERVANT

IF there were only rikshas in Tunis it would be like Japan, for here, too, you have the stimulating influence of an environment so fresh that every minute is an entertainment.

I can well remember how tickled we were at our first meal in Japan by the menu, on which every dish was marked in plain figures, because the servants knew no English, except the numerals from one to twenty, and the word "boy," which expressed a male Japanese without any regard for the number of his years. The boy who brought it was an undiluted Japanese, dressed in the blue cotton tights of the coolie class, and wore no shoes, because, as one of them who could speak a little English observed, "The Japanese do not make a street of their homes."

Just as that Japanese brought you a plate of soup at a run and hissed and rubbed his knees when you ordered a fresh number, so in Tunis, to our delight, our lunch was brought by an

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Photo by Garrigues, Tunis.

THE AVENUE DE FRANCE AND THE GATEWAY TO THE ARAB CITY, WITH THE HOTEL EYMON BEHIND IT.

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Arab who spoke no English, and not very much French, and wore his fine native clothes.

Just as the Japanese upsets our ideas by taking off his shoes in the house, the Arab upsets them by keeping on his hat—that is to say, his fez, which he calls a *chéchia*, and for which quite a poor man gives as much as a stockbroker gives for his panama. Achmet was the name of our infidel, and he looked rather like Lord Byron in fancy dress. He wore, while performing the most menial duties, a fine white cambric shirt and a bolero and a divided skirt of good Austrian blue faced-cloth, embroidered all over with black silk braid, a suit which, when we knew him better, he told us cost ten pounds.

The dining-room of our hotel made a good background for its dazzling Arab servants. Its cool white walls were divided up with horse-shoe arches. By one table was a balcony with more arches, hung in hours of sunshine with blinds of green reeds. We often dined on that balcony, and watched the gay Arab life below, for our hotel looked out on the Porte de France, under which the whole Arab population passes on its way from the bazars to ride in the trams to its favourite cafés. Of such is the life of the Arab. He finds no amusement in the society of his wife.

Our bedrooms looked on the beautiful old horse-shoe arch of that gate, and I have put my head out

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of my window at almost all hours of the night without discovering any sign of the Arabs going to bed. A steady stream of silent white figures flows through the arch—for all the light, bright colours worn by the Arabs look white in the electric light, which blazes like the African sun. How vain is their silence, for on the borderland between the gay French city and the ancient home of the Arab, thousands of Sicilians and Maltese live on selling indifferent oranges, and the voice of the Sicilian, which is only hushed in the grave, always suggests an auctioneer recommending his goods to heaven.

Most Tunisian hotels are not large according to our ideas. They are more like restaurants with a few bedrooms attached—excellent restaurants with Parisian food and Italian prices; this suits the habit of the population, which prefers to live in the cheapest lodgings in the cheapest way, and to go to its restaurant and its café, where it gets entertainment of both sorts, food and excitement. Providentially there are not enough foreigners as yet to pay for large establishments. Living over a restaurant is so much pleasanter and more amusing, and the bedrooms are large and good and clean, though there may be no sitting-room. This does not signify, because the whole city is your parlour.

If you are wise enough to go to the right kind of restaurant, wine, quite decent wine, is included

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in your pension, and on special days you will get delicious kous-kouss and *bouille-baisse*, or any other delicacy known to the three nations—French, Arabs, and Italians. The English no longer count, though we have had a consul there for nearly two centuries and a half, and Tunis leaned on England till Lord Granville presented it to France with his fatuous grin. I am very glad he did, for England would not have taken it, and France has made it one of the safest and most delightful playgrounds on the Mediterranean. As a winterer I can only hope that she will make another Tunis of Fez in the shortest possible time.

You are supposed to go without breakfast unless you pay extra for it, but this is because the hotels are really restaurants, and the patients take their coffee in their lodgings. The proprietor would rather you took it in a café, so as to leave his servants free till it is time to prepare for lunch.

Lunch is a masculine meal. The business man, with an eye on his siesta afterwards, positively beams on the three or four dishes, followed by cheese and dessert, and the smart French officer smiles also, as if the day was just going to begin for him, like his brother the British officer.

I conceived a great admiration for the French officers at Tunis. They were big, handsome fellows, very smart, and their reserve was not due to want of attractiveness on the part of the ladies. It is not

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easy to differentiate between their uniforms; there are so many regiments at Tunis. But ballooning French trousers strapped tight into the ankle were the feature of that mass, whether made of dark blue or light blue cloth, or snowy ducks; and when well cut and worn by a tall, soldierly man, they are monstrously effective.

Dinner was the meal of that restaurant—quite a long dinner if you were staying in the house, for they brought you the menu to choose from, and you were allowed to select so many dishes.

There were many little parties with ladies—often beautiful women, beautifully dressed, and some of them with the unmistakable stamp of breeding.

I have been describing the Hôtel Eymon, the most popular restaurant in Tunis, very moderate in price, with delicious food and large, clean bedrooms. We stayed there.

There are other kinds of hotels in Tunis,—the Tunisia-Palace, expensive and ambitious; the Hôtel de Paris, a very old-established and comfortable hotel of the family order, to which French families wintering in Tunis go back and back again; the Hôtel de France, in the Avenue de France, in the gayest part of the town; and queer little hotels, infinitely picturesque and doubtless extremely popular with bachelors, in the Rue d'Église and other streets of the Arab town.

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My advice about hotels is, if you are satisfied with comfort and wish to see the life of the place, go to an hotel where they have Arab servants; it makes all the difference to me whether I am waited on by a Swiss in a dirty dress suit or an Oriental in his spotless native dress. And there is more than a sentimental and spectacular interest in the matter; for if there are natives about, they keep you up to seeing the sights of the native town. To the Swiss, the Birthday of the Prophet is nothing. He is not proud of the Sadiki College; he does not think of the camel-market; he has very likely never heard of the weekly procession of the women with cemetery candles to the tomb of Lella Manouba. If he does advise you to see anything native, ten to one it will be either the disgusting hip-dances of the *café-chantant* on the way to the Bab-Souika, or the weekly executions out at the Bardo.

The Hôtel Eymon had an Arab porter who slept on a bench inside the door, as in any Arab house. He saluted you extravagantly whenever you passed up and down. Achmet, our Arab waiter, had always some information to give us about something which would be doing in the native town, or Arab institutions, or Arab dishes, and, if we were dining on the balcony, would point out this or that queer bit of native life. So it was as good as being in Japan again.

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CHAPTER IV

THE APPROACH TO THE BAZARS OF TUNIS

THE tradition is that Tunis was founded before Carthage. So critical a historian as Freeman accepts this, and the fact is very important, because Tunis has had her due share of conquerors, but none of them have taken the trouble to plough up the foundations of shops and dwellings, which came in equally handy for themselves, though they may have battered down ramparts and used fire in fighting or revenge.

Therefore, we may take it that the Moorish city clustered round the Kasbah, which the French found and have left as it was, occupies practically the same position as the Tunes of Carthaginian times, and that many traces of that day, besides columns and capitals, are preserved in the architecture of the Arab city. Here, in fact, we see a ghost of Carthage.

One of the strongest arguments for the Byrsa being the site of the citadel of Carthage seems to me that it occupies an exactly analogous position to the Kasbah of this unchanged Tunis. It is from the Rue

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Photo by Garrigues, Tunis.

ANCIENT MOSQUE.

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d'Église and Rue de la Kasbah at Tunis that I can best picture those wandering streets of high houses which led from the ports to the citadel of Carthage, up which it took the Romans days to force their way, when they had entered the walls of the city, in the final storming. These two streets lead from the sea-gate, now the Porte de France, to the citadel, and in ancient times doubtless the galleys came right up to the Porte de France. It is inconceivable that the city should have been built a mile from the sea.

Before describing the bazars it is well to picture these streets, which possess a great interest to the tourist, as they are bargain streets. Just inside the Bab-el-Behara, or sea-gate of the Beys, which is now called the Porte de France and is the boundary between the French and the Arab cities, facing the Gate, stands the Hôtel Eymon, called "Gigino" in the days when Tunis was to have been Italian, not French. There is still a large Italian or Sicilian population on either side of it, at the mouth of the two ancient streets which lead up to the Kasbah, the Rue d'Église and the Rue de la Kasbah. The hotel faces both streets, as well as the Bourse and the Porte de France, and the British Consulate and a *café-chantant*, which means a drinking-shop where extra-fat Jewesses dance.

The Rue d'Église might well be called the Rue Cosmopolis, it is so typical of the mixture of races which constitute the population of modern Tunis.

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At its entrance, joining the hotel, are a mosque—significant of the fact that here the Arab city begins—and a row of cheap-jack shops, mostly hatters and tailors, in which the cheap-splendour-loving Sicilian delights. The shop which juts out on to the square is fit for the frontispiece of a comic journal.

On the curbstone which surrounds it sit the Berber porters, dressed in a sort of sackcloth made of camel's hair, with a sack over their heads which does for sunshade or overcoat, according to the requirements, and a sort of tool-bag, and a piece of rope. The rope comes in handy if they are carrying a thing like a piano on the back. It is looped round the piano and strained against the forehead.

In Tunis, when you buy anything, you do not carry it yourself; you hire a man or boy according to the size to carry it for you, and pay him so many halfpence. There seems to be a sort of tariff, for the thrifty French cook, when she does her mistress's marketing in the morning, engages her porter without making a bargain, and the ordinary mortal does not get much change out of a French cook. In France the foreign residents' proverb is, "Set a Frenchwoman to catch a Frenchwoman." All these much-enduring porters, swarthy men with protruding lower jaws, are said to be Berbers. A great deal is put down to Berbers—a silent race who do not contradict newspaper reports.

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Just over their heads is written in letters as large as themselves the Italian for "Happy Design," and higher up English is butchered to make a Roman holiday, with the words "London Higlif," which are considered to imply that the hats sold in the establishment are typical of high life in London. The only British-looking articles I saw were ninety-centime (rather niggardly ninepenny) panamas, made in Tuscany of papery straw, and three-franc-fifty (not much better than half-a-crown) solar topees, ghosts of the Christies manufactured for Anglo-Indians.

At first you feel sorry that Abraham (for you see the Abraham of the Bible all day long in Tunis) should form such a poor idea of the chosen people of to-day; but you can comfort yourself, for Arabs can seldom read their own language, let alone any other.

As the street narrows above this palace of "Happy Design" and "Higlif" in London, you pass a number of emporiums of the most appalling taste, where the poor but ambitious Sicilian buys hats and gloves; and enough belts and waist-bands for the whole Regency, which must have been made in Japan from European models for the consumption of Asiatics.

Above these shops, which can only excite the derision of the tourist unless he knows the price of Arab belts and wishes to bargain down to it, come others much more interesting, a hotel or two,

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and the church which gives the street its name. The shops, like all shops in the native city, are small and low, but loved of tourists, for this is the street where they do some of their most interesting shopping at moderate prices.

The inhabitants of the Rue d'Église are aware that they cannot compete with the shops of wealthy French firms in the Avenue de France or the Rue d'Italie; they are aware also that tourists who do not know the bazars expect to pick up a lot of Oriental bargains in them: therefore it behoves them to label their goods with catchpenny prices.

For prices varying from sixpence to a shilling you can buy delightful silver rings, with an elegant Arabic inscription running round them in high relief. It looks like a blessing from the Koran, but it really spells Tunis, and the rings can be sold so cheap because they are stamped-out by the thousand. You can get them in silver gilt for a shilling, and eighteen-carat gold for five shillings.

Tunis has a perfect craze for hall-marks. It takes you an extra two days to have anything made of silver, because the shop-keeper is afraid to let it pass out of his hands till it is hall-marked. You can buy a hall-marked silver hand of Fatma as low as fifty centimes, which is not much more than four-pence-halfpenny.

Before you have been in Tunis twenty-four hours

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you will have discovered that certain lucky marks like the hand of Fatma are so universal that you can hardly get a curbstone or a cigarette without one of them. At first the British young lady does not see exactly how she can beautify her person by hanging hands of Fatma or silver copies of uncouth padlocks on it, and the padlocks remain a difficulty always; but if the hands are of antique silver, richly chased, and make patterns on a necklace or watch-chain, she gets quite fond of them.

It is the fibula which takes her heart—a barbaric-looking brooch consisting of a horse-shoe with nearly closed ends, with a skewer working round it, the oldest known type of brooch, which is to be found in the tombs of ancient Britons, ancient Etruscans, Greeks, Romans, and Carthaginians, and who knows how many more. You put the point of the skewer between the ends of the horse-shoe when you stab it through the fabric which it is to hold together, then give the ring a half-turn. The Bedouins keep their clothing together and their jewellery secured with about half-a-dozen of these fibulæ each; and as worn by them and the Arabs they are exceedingly picturesque, for they vary from brass and white metal covered with good-luck signs to rich antique silver with flashing jewels in the points of the horse-shoes.

Arab watch-chains are even more attractive to

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the feminine mind, which sees in them, not guards for watches, but fanholders and chatelaines. Consisting as they do of hanks of fine chains, bunched together at intervals with bosses of turquoise-blue or ultramarine enamel terminating in tassels, they are elegant as dress details although barbaric as jewellery, and they are made as handsome in white metal as they are in silver, because base metals are more in uniformity with the demands of the Koran than are precious metals. For three shillings you can buy quite a good one. The Arabs wear them, with Waterburys attached, in their bosoms or in an invisible pocket behind a delicately embroidered device on the left breast, like the coat-of-arms on a college blazer.

But I must not give you a catalogue of semi-Arabic brooches and rings and chains and hatpins for sale in these shops, where you can also buy bangles and napkin-rings, if not anklets, of Bedouin patterns, in silver at unruinous prices, when you cannot strike a hawker of Bedouin white-metal jewellery. Silver articles in the bazars are very dear for a reason which will appear, and there is a silver shop even dearer in the Rue d'Église, where they sell lovely teapots and bowls and wearing articles of hammered work at distinctly dear prices. This is a desirable shop for those who need not consider expense.

Near these jewellers' shops are the Sicilian shoemakers, who supply the wealthy Arabs—beautiful

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workmen, modest in price, whose windows are full of slippers in the delicate kids and antelope skins which rich Arabs affect. Here, too, is a maker of fascinating Arab texts and pictures on glass plates; and on the opposite side are the tinsmiths, who make the tiny long-handled coffee-saucepans, which look like churchwarden pipes and which the attendants carry, half-a-dozen in one hand, full of boiling coffee.

The Rue d'Église really has a church in it—the only Roman Catholic church, except the Cathedral, which meets the eye in Tunis proper; and even it does not meet the eye much, for you go through a mosque-like entrance into a handsome courtyard surrounded with black and white arches, which make it look as if it belonged to a rich Arab house. The church is a most unnoticeable affair. The things you remember best about the whole place are a couple of stones from the Carthage of Cyprian or Augustine, irregular in shape and engraved with Punic characters, which are built into a wall upstairs in a part of the monastery where monks and nuns make both men and women feel that they have no business to be there.

Near the church are a couple of hotels, one of which tempts you with its picturesqueness—a garden and an antique Jew's courtyard; but otherwise suggests murder and pestilence. You feel that you

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would be showing supreme daring if you only had lunch there.

Not far above this is rather a noble courtyard with tiers of black and white arcading, one of the few Mahometan buildings which Christians are allowed to enter freely, and which excites their curiosity by the crowds of the old, the halt, and the very poor which assemble round its entrance at stated times. This is the office of the Administration of the Habous—in other words, of the Mahometan ecclesiastical commissioners of Tunis. I believe I am right in saying that all the religious revenues and institutions of Mahometan Tunis are managed here, and the revenues are very large. The local Sheikh-ul-Islam is very rich, and the Cadis are beyond the need of temptation.

Next you come to the bit which is almost a portion of the bazar, a sort of "Outer Temple," a district abandoned to the hated Jews. I might have said hateful, for they almost drag the passer-by into their shops, which vary in degree, for on one side of the road are the general dealer, selling tea and queer little Constantinople teapots, and the picturesque old brass-worker whose bearded face adorns so many postcards; and on the other side are large curio-shops of the order you find in the bazar.

The old brass-worker is a Turkish Jew, who sells the kind of brass that charms the tourist in

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Photo by Garrigues, Tunis.

A STREET IN THE RICH ARABS' QUARTER.

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Constantinople—ewers, chased or perforated cigar-cases, brass boxes with Arabic writing in relief, flower bowls, and the queer coffee-mills which look like policeman's staves. He is a disobliging and rude old man, who begins by scornfully refusing to bargain, and ends, as your stay nears its close, with trying to force you to bargain. But neither he nor his wife, typical Turks to look at, can speak English or French or Italian.

He is handicapped heavily, since the Jew curio-dealers opposite keep irrepressible boy-touts, who pursue you to and from the bazar with their "Good morning . . . how are you? . . . look here . . . Madam or mees . . . awfully jolly . . . very cheap . . . no charge . . . you come in quite free . . . you not buy anything unless you wish." They worried us so often that one day we took them at their word, and went in and examined everything in the place, and inquired the price of everything, and then said we wouldn't make up our minds just then! The face of the proprietor was a psychological novel in itself. He was longing to flame out in a volley of abuse, but he knew that we were not leaving Tunis immediately, and he was also aware, by the things which interested us and the questions which we asked, that we must have been pretty extensive buyers of curios. But I should have regretted the hour or two taken up with

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examining his shop had it not been for the fact that he had some quite interesting pieces, especially of the old gilt Tunisian crystal ware. He had invited us to look at everything without buying, but he was mad with rage that he had not succeeded in hooking us with any of his baits.

Of course, he had a good deal of catchpenny stuff for tourists,—d'oyleys embroidered or supposed to have been embroidered in harems; antimacassars of gaudy silk with glaring patterns in cicatrices of gold thread; highly lacquered brass ware, badly stamped or engraved, in inelegant, unnaturally Oriental extravaganzas of shapes; and barbaric jewellery, so barbaric that no savage above an Australian aborigine would look at it. These filled the doorways, but in the windows were some charming pieces of glass and old turquoise cloisonné; and most of these Jew shops have fine rugs and carpets and curtains in reserve, if you don't mind paying through the nose for them. Nor are they indisposed to sell you things at the proper price, when they know that you will give that and no more. This is only at the end of an intolerable deal of bargaining, and the worst of these Jew dealers is that they never let you pass their shops without touting.

Later in our visit, finding that we did not mean to deal with them, they began to be a little cheeky, but were promptly crushed by a common Arab

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bazar guide, who happened to hear them, and told them in the plainest way that in Tunis Jews were dirt, only to be tolerated when they behaved. I said nothing, but wondered whether the Jews were cowed by French or Arab anti-Semitic ideas. The Jews, however, are no longer forbidden to dress like Arabs or confined to any particular quarter, and as a matter of fact, control much of the commerce of the bazars, which we could just see beyond a black, ominous-looking vault.

It was no wonder that it looks ominous, for as a matter of fact it belongs to the prison of the Bey, the scene doubtless of many miscarriages of justice. The dark vault goes right under the prison, and half-way up it on the right-hand side the prison doors are wide open to receive the prisoners. You see whole gangs of them sometimes being marched in manacles through the bazars. The doorway is guarded by big negro soldiers with fixed bayonets, but one feels as if the prisoners would not try to escape if there was no guard, for prisons are managed on club lines in Tunis. Behind the guard are a staircase and a lot of heavy gratings. The prison was built and is more adapted for a Turkish barrack.

Once through the prison you are in the bazars. The approach through the Rue de le Kasbah is less interesting, unless you strike it when the second-hand

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brass stalls are spread on the ground as you enter the Souk of the Copper-smiths. The mouth of the street is occupied by Sicilian greengrocers, who have not so keen an eye for decoration here as they have in Palermo. Soon the Ghetto branches off to the right, and a whole new chapter of incidents opens up there. The Court of the Cadis, mightily interesting and typical, and one of the largest prisons, with another court attached, also lie out in this direction. I am leaving the description of the second-hand brass stalls till later, because the Rue d'Église is practically the route which every foreigner takes to the bazar.

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CHAPTER V

THE BAZARS

IT may be more correct to say bazar than bazars, but the English speak of the bazars; Tunisians speak of the "souks." The bazar of Tunis is, as I have said already, the best bit of the Orient easily accessible from London. It is far more Oriental than the Grand Bazar at Constantinople, though you need no dragoman or guide at Tunis to interpret for you, and at Constantinople you are helpless without one. The journey to Cairo is twice as long, and the difference in expense is enormous. Algiers is not very Oriental; Morocco is not very safe: the bazar of Tunis is both.

You cannot believe how Oriental it is until you have been there. You often go through it without seeing one other European. The whole plan of the place is Oriental enough for the *Arabian Nights*. If you happen to be there on a fête-night you feel that you are back in the *Arabian Nights*. By day you are back in the Orient of the middle ages, with a strong mixture of the classics; for the souks were

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built very long ago, and the columns in them are apt to be as old as our era, because they could be had, for the carting of them, from Carthage.

What is the bazar of Tunis like? I think it is more like Canton or the native city at Shanghai than anything else I know, for it is, as it were, a whole town with hardly any sky, a whole city under one roof swarming with Oriental life, carrying on its trade in the traditional Oriental way, without doors or windows by day, but shutters by night, which vanish all day long; transacting the most part of its business without table or chair; content with shops of single rooms no larger than cupboards!—shops deprived of their natural prey—woman; not excluding horses, but not using them.

You enter the Tunis bazar dramatically, if you approach it from the Rue d'Église. Not only do you go through the prison, but you come out almost immediately upon the Zitouna Mosque, generally known as the Grand Mosque of Tunis, which was originally a church founded by the Emperor Charles V. and has outside it the most imposing arcade of any mosque. It has also a handsome doorway approached by a sweeping flight of steps. The shops opposite form a sort of grocers' souk, but nobody heeds them. Eyes are bent on the stately mosque, and the moment afterwards you find yourself in the Souk-el-Attarin, the bazar of the perfume-sellers, the premier souk.

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Photo by Garrigues, Tunis.

AN ARAB PERFUMER'S SHOP IN THE SOUK-AL-ATTARIN.

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Except that it is wider and higher than the other souks, one does not see at first glance why it should take the first place ; for there is seldom much business going on, and the street is less crowded with Arab traffic than most, in proportion to its size. The proprietors stand about and talk to each other ; it is more like a club than a souk. Rumour says that it is still a sort of club, though the necessity for it no longer exists. In Beylical times it was not safe to admit that you had any accumulated wealth, for the Bey would have wanted his share. The wealthy and long-descended Moors, therefore, were nominally perfume-sellers in the bazar. They did not sell much, because they had no need for gain on the one hand, and, on the other, large sales would have betrayed their wealth. Now, when they have no occasion to conceal it, they go on keeping perfumeries in a dilettante way, but talk a great deal of their family, their harems and other pleasant possessions, and the land and the castles they left behind in Spain. Many other people have castles in Spain, but it is only the Tunis Moors who have brought away the keys and the title-deeds of this unreal estate.

The perfumer-sellers' shops are different from any others in the souk. They not only have counters upon which the proprietor does not sit, but benches for his customers and rudiments of windows. This is the acme of splendour for the bazar.

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The front of the shop is occupied with grand candles, some of them very grand, five-branched affairs, representing the hand of Fatma, used for weddings, and others shaped almost like sugar-loaves, used for graves. The candle-maker plays almost as important a part in Arab life as the barber. The perfumes are really very precious, for they are not the mere scent sold by an Eugene Rimmel or an Atkinson, but concentrated essence, one drop of which will go so far that you think the stories they are telling you must be about liquid air. Jessamine is the most prized of the perfumes.

The Arab uses scents for purposes undreamt of in our philosophy. He puts it in his coffee and his cigarettes, innovations which most English people, even very young ladies, cordially detest. It is whispered that he sells not only scents, but the detrimental *hashish*, upon which the French authorities frown, because that product of hemp, if you put it in your pipe and smoke it, makes you mad or idiotic.

In any case, he has a very charming little shop with mahogany and glass fittings which make him look like a stuffed bird, and a sort of ingle with forms in its corners, on the opposite side of the counter, for his customers to sit on, with a general effect which makes you look for the fire-place. Perfume-sellers are Moors or Arabs, but they don't

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behave as such, for they address the passing foreigner in English or French, and though they may not ask him straight off to buy their wares, they entangle him with conversation, or assistance in finding his way, to lead up to a recommendation of their scent as the best in the world.

Perhaps it is the best, but very few foreigners want to buy it at more than its weight in gold. As the American observed, very few foreigners like scents that last a century. You don't get the climax of their devotion unless you are a lady, when they offer to take you over their harems rather than have you pass by their shops.

The Souk-el-Attarin is the main thoroughfare through the bazar to the Dar-el-Bey, the town palace, where the ruler of Tunis is supposed to pass two nights of the year; though he never does now that the French occupy the city, preferring to make a sort of Vatican of his palace at the Bardo.

Before you get to the palace you will strike a notable feature of the bazar at Tunis, the street auctions. Men go about carrying piles of goods on their arms or shoulders or heads, selling them to the highest bidders. It is not easy to distinguish the purchasers, for this causes a crowd as thick as a salmon-run in a Canadian river. Watches are a favourite thing to offer in this way, though at first glance it

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seems a little risky to dangle a handful of watches in such a crowd of "Fagins."

Hardly to be distinguished from these alfresco auctioneers are the touts who dangle a single article before a foreigner like a worm at the end of a fishing-line. Burnouses are a favourite bait. A burnous of fine white wool, as light as cotton and edged with heliotrope, is almost irresistible to a daughter of Eve.

The Nubian freelances who do this job lack polish compared to the Arabs. Their presence shows that the souk of the tailors is largely in Jew hands. Here I must point out the prime difference between the Jew and the Arab merchant in the souks. The Jew touts to every foreigner who passes, and asks about twice as much as he is willing to take; the Arab, unless he is corrupted by a demoralising business like perfume-selling, does not seek customers, and if the customers seek him, never seems to care whether they buy or not. He states his price and will not come down a single sou.

The Souk of the Tailors, where they sell burnouses and other fancy wraps, is one of the great places for bargaining—if not for bargains, ergo. But in the Souk of the Tailors only man is vile. The street is one of the most beautiful in the bazars, for the shops, with their colonnades of pillars carried off from Carthage, are loftier and larger than is the wont in

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Photo by Garrigues, Tunis.

THE BAZAR DES ETOFFES.

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the souks, and have an ancient and billowy cornice, though the wooden roof overhead is not so effective as the lofty stone vaulting of the Souk of the Perfume-sellers and the Souk of the Fabric-sellers. As I have said above, the whole bazar is practically under one roof, like the city of Canton. The heavens are not allowed any insight into what goes on in the bazars, although the absence of the eternal feminine and the presence of the paternal French Government leaves them nothing worse to disclose than a little mild cheating. Whereas in Canton, *quien sabe* ?

A souk, with its pillars of old Carthage picked out in scarlet and green, its rich Oriental stuffs billowing over the narrow limits of its shops, and its crowds of straight, lithe Arabs, elegantly draped in raiment, that suggests the rainbow, in the height of biblical fashion, is a sight never to be forgotten. Even a greengrocer's shop in Sicily is not to be compared with it. There is really nothing like it, except a d'oyley made in a harem for the Earl's Court Exhibition.

The Souk of the Fabrics does not equal in splendour the Souk of the Tailors, as it sweeps down proudly from the palace of the Bey to the pawnshop of Barbouchi Brothers, which arrogates the title of bazar to itself. Its shops are altogether smaller, its precious stuffs are folded and put away in shelves, its street is narrower, and Jews can have no finger

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in the business, because the shopkeepers here exert themselves not, neither do they bargain.

After lunch this is one of the best streets for seeing the Arab *au naturel*, his wont being to snooze on his counter, upon which he will sit in an expansive way, or lie with his legs higher than his head. To the patient foreigner this is one of the more interesting streets, for the merchants really have things he might want to buy, such as the long pieces of brocade coloured like a Roman scarf, which every Arab who is not a pauper uses for winding round his waist as a sort of belt and pocket combined. The foreigners generally buy the same kind of thing in three-franc lengths of about a couple of yards, for putting over the backs of armchairs when they begin to be *heady*. Of similar material is the dark sail which a Tunis woman of the middle class holds in front of her when she glides down the streets.

You can buy some charming curtains here if you like to pay more for them than you pay at Liberty's, for the sentiment (and trouble) of carrying them home from Tunis; and there are various two-yard pieces of effective striped Oriental stuffs which you might not get at Liberty's. In any case, it ought to be called the "Souk of the Stripes," because every piece of cloth in the whole bazar is a succession of gaudy stripes.

In this narrow Souk of the Fabric-sellers, which

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has some particularly curious old columns, you are the prey of touts, for a Jew who keeps a curio-shop just below it moves heaven and earth to get customers.[1] I use the phrase advisedly, because his favourite emissaries are a Mahometan saint, who first interests you as a marabout and then drags you into this Jewish spider's den, and a fat German woman who offers to take ladies over the harem of a minister of the Bey, and always ends up with trying to get them into the webs of the same spider. This Jew sells charming jewellery, more or less antique, of fancy dress patterns, and other articles likely to tempt the woman, down to fine gauzes, spangled, which are recommended as specially suitable for head-wraps in going to the theatre. The spider's goods are good enough ; it is his prices which are at fault.

In the Tunis bazars it is the custom for the

[1] In my chapter on "The Night of the Prophet" I have mentioned a marabout who knew our dragoman, and came and sat down beside us to show us the hospitalities of the bazar. He begged us to take coffee with him. He was a saint because he had been three times to Mecca; but in Tunis this may be the result of your parentage or of your place of birth, or because you were born "simple." There was no mistake as to the estimation in which he was held in the bazar; even children kissed his robes as he passed. The next day Mrs. Von Pernull, wife of Cook's correspondent in Sicily, who had been with us, was passing through the bazar when the marabout came up to her, and, seizing her by the wrist, dragged her along a narrow street into a building. It was nothing worse than a carpet and curio bazar kept by a Jew; but she had great difficulty in getting out without making large purchases, and was probably only saved by mentioning her husband's position.

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merchants to provide coffee gratis for any European who comes into their shops. Coffee only costs a penny a cup and saucer, or a halfpenny a cup. As the merchants provide their own cups, they may get it at an even lower rate, so the outlay is not ruinous. In Japanese shops, except the very humblest, every visitor is offered relays of tea the whole time he is shopping. Whatever the number of visitors, five cups of tea make their appearance on the tray, this being the etiquette number. Tea in Japan and coffee in Tunis act the same purpose; they make the visitors sit down—and he who hesitates is lost.

By-and-by the merchants of Tunis will get a little cleverer, and grasp that all English ladies like tea, and that not all like Turkish coffee; and tea would be a perfectly simple matter in the bazars, because the Arabs drink huge quantities of it. So insistent are the Jewish curio-shopkeepers, so den-like are their shops, that ladies often wonder how they escape from them at all without buying bales of gauzes and embroideries, if not carpets.

There are three or four very large establishments of this kind in the bazar. The best to patronise is kept by a man whose name is suggestive of an *amour*, but he is a very harmless and respectable old gentleman, with a great deal more daylight in his shop and his methods than the rest of them, possibly because he is by way of being a Moor and not a Jew. His

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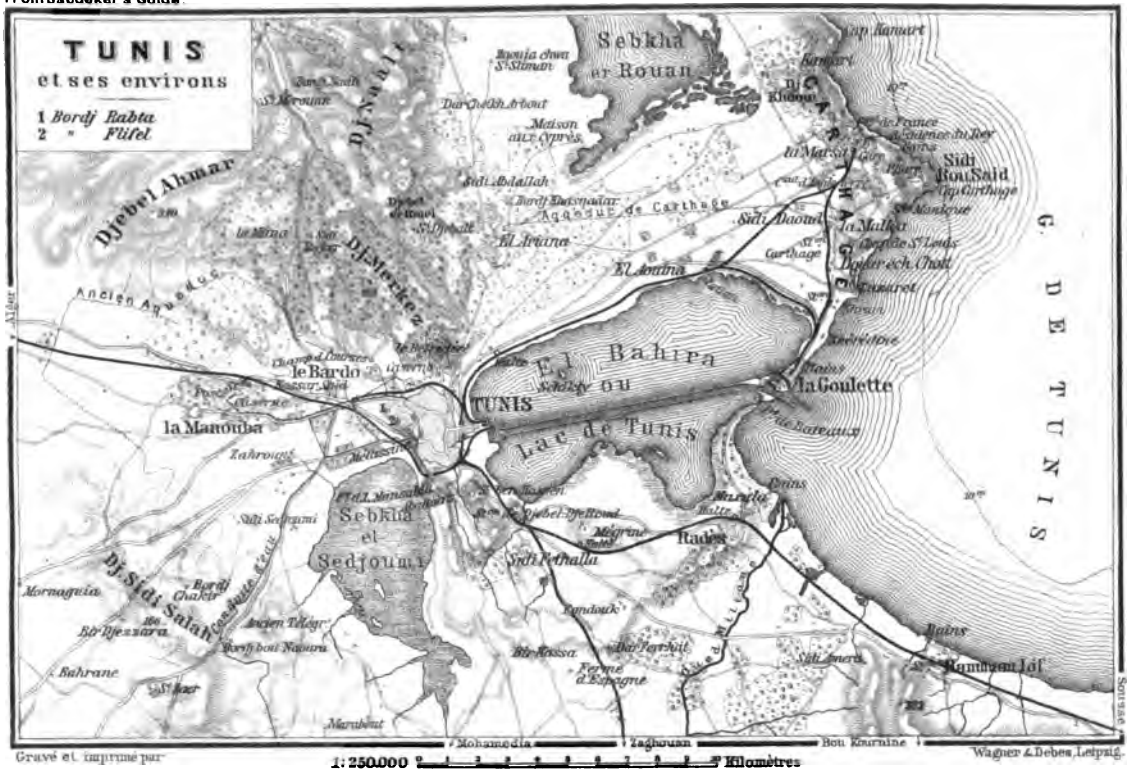
From Baedeker's Guide



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shop is very interesting. From his upper windows you command a close view of two minarets, so this is a good place to go if you want to hear the "muezzin." You examine his stock with more or less views of purchasing, and keep your weather eye open until the muezzin begins to walk round the gallery at the top of the minaret, calling on the faithful to leave off sleeping or talking or smoking or playing cards (because the Arabs never seem to be doing any work), to go to the mosque to pray.

In Tunis you never see people praying in the streets, as you do in some Mahometan places. The faithful are many of them very unfaithful in their observances. Monsieur Amour, for instance (a name as unsuitable to its owner as Monsieur Beaucaire would be), has never evinced the slightest interest in the muezzin when I have been in his shop, and about half the Arabs who are sitting at cafés, when they hear it, keep their seats. The muezzin is not a very easy thing for a European to time, and he may go a week without noticing one, though the cry echoes from five hundred mosques, because the Mahometans do not use the stereotyped time of civilised nations. They calculate it every day according to the season of the year.

M. Amour watches you patiently without appearing to watch you, while you are wasting valuable time on the muezzin, and, when it is

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finished, calls his men to show you things. He generally begins with a carpet, priced at a thousand or two thousand pounds, in case you should be the kind of person who would buy such things. I suppose there have been occasions on which he has sold them, for Mr. Liberty may have visited his shop; but the ordinary customer submits passively to thousand-pound carpets, meaning, when he or she has looked at what M. Amour wishes to show, to make up for the muezzin by asking for something which costs about one-franc-fifty.

And yet these carpets are worth looking at, if it is only to compare them with punctured balloons, which they resemble. M. Amour takes up a huge film with a rich dark effect, but mingled of many colours. He flings it in the air with the hand of a magician, and it gradually settles itself on the floor; but not flat, for it is so exquisitely fine in its weaving that it imprisons air-bubbles large enough to hold a man, just as a balloon-case does when it is laid on mother earth. This carpet is woven of silk with the regular carpet texture, and a surface like shaved caracal; but thinner, I presume, than most silk dresses, for though it is an enormous carpet he offers to draw its corner through a napkin-ring. But he had no napkin-rings handy for exhibition purposes when we were there. It is certainly very thin, as well as deliciously soft to feel. I felt that it would make

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Photo by Garrigues, Tunis.

A MOSQUE IN THE BAZAR.

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ideal pocket-handkerchiefs for very bad colds, if it proved unsaleable as a whole.

Seriously speaking, these priceless Arab carpets are very wonderful. On such a magic carpet Aladdin might well have ballooned, even without the aid of the genii of the ring. They give you an idea of the lost glory of Granada, and the art of making them is losing itself in this day of cheap effects, aniline dyes, and short staples. It is significant that, on a great occasion like the Birthday of the Prophet, M. Amour did not hesitate to decorate the outside of his shop with this thousand-guinea carpet draped on the wall.

We did not buy any of these carpets, or any armour worn by the companions of St. Louis, crusading in the thirteenth century. We were untempted by the rich rugs from Kurdistan, and curtains from Damascus, which he assured us were good enough for the Bey's palace. Like other unconscientious foreigners, we looked round for something which would let us down easily in the matter of patronage. The cheapest articles of any conceivable use were the aforesaid gauze veils stuck over with spangles, and the black ones cost ten francs—two francs more than the sky blue or scarlet, probably because English people are not likely to buy any colour but black.

If honest, M. Amour is hardly sufficiently without guile to be called a Nathanael. Still, he is a

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nice old man, not too over-reaching, and if you want to buy good things, and go armed with a good dragoman, and don't mind paying a little more in Tunis than you would pay at Liberty's, deal with M. Amour, and enjoy yourself in contemplating and questioning about his princely carpets and brasses.

There is only one curio-shop in the bazar where you can hope for bargains. It is kept by a Jew named Abdallah, with whom you can bargain in Sicilian fashion. This is a fine art. In Sicily, when you become a customer at a curio-shop, you begin by wasting a good deal of time. The man asks his top price, you counter him with your bottom price. Then begins a game of spiritual poker, in which there are two ultimate ratios—viz. the price he will take when, to use an American phrase, he gets down to bed-rock, and the percentage which your anxiety to possess the article adds to its value.

If you don't care about it, but are just buying it because it is cheap, it has to be cheap; but if you are at all nervous about losing it, or if there is another bidder in the field, the price goes up with a bound. The shopkeeper is always there (except when you want him specially), and until you are on the eve of departure he is perfectly content to let the bargaining remain an academic discussion, in which his concessions are only vague. But on the day when you or he are determined to bring the matter to a

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head, there is much discussion and sharpening of wits.

If you are an old hand at bargaining in Sicily, and see a good many things which you would like to buy in his shop, you have it out with him on the first day. After this, very likely, if he finds that you know the proper prices, he will ask you whether he shall tell you the *ultimo prezzo*, the lowest price, right off. You will probably say yes, to shorten the process of purchase. Then you have to beware; for on the one hand, he cannot always resist the temptation to ask more than he intends to take, and on the other hand, he is insulted if you attempt to bargain with him on what he calls his *ultimo prezzo*.

There is of course a *via media*, as there always is in Sicily, for those who walk warily. He has, we will say, asked you twenty francs for a thing which should have been twelve francs. You want the thing, and you know he has asked you eight francs too much; but you cannot offer him twelve francs, for that would outrage his dignity. What you have to do is to look round the shop and find something you covet which is worth as near as possible the amount he is overcharging you. Then you say to him, "Signore, I will give you the twenty francs for the turquoise brooch if you give me that marquise ring as a *buona mano*." He has no objection to making the present. He knows perfectly well that you have

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demanded it because he has lied about the *ultimo prezzo*, but "his face is saved."

It is a simpler way to fix your own price for the article you intend to buy, and say, "Signore, I will give you twelve francs for that turquoise brooch." If he finds that you mean what you say he will either accept your offer or say, "*Impossibile, signore.* I will show you what I paid for it, and you can give me a little—a franc or two—on that." They nearly always keep a note of what they paid, and you can rely on this. Possibly there is some police regulation on the subject.

This is the treatment which I applied with some success to the Jew Abdallah of the Tunis bazar.

Abdallah was a plain man to look at, by which I imply that he was fattish, bearded, and pasty-faced, and not that his eyes were wells of truth. But he was a moderately fair-dealing person, and aware that he was dealing with patrons who had attacked curio-shops in skirmishing order on the shores of many seas. He thoroughly enjoyed himself. He brought Arab coins, and buckles and bracelets of metal so foul that they stank like gas. He brought also a fine old hand of Fatma, quaintly scrolled, of silver, soft with purity. He protested that they all were silver, and when he saw that we knew better, added, "But some of it is German." Who says after this that German arts and manufactures and civilisation are not

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making their way? "Abdallah," I said, "the English do not like German things, so I will only buy the other kind of silver." We spoke in Italian, which is quite as useful as French at Tunis.

We found Abdallah invaluable, for he had much the same sort of things in his shop as the swaggering Jew, who used Mahometan saints and harems as baits and would not take less than double the price for anything. Abdallah, on the other hand, was content with cost price and a reasonable profit, always supposing that you could find out what the cost price was; and though he chafed under it, he submitted to my examining his stock and putting my own price on the things I might conceivably buy.

Then we had another war of wits. At first, when I put a price on a thing, Abdallah concluded that I specially wanted that article, and at once doubled my figures. I reproached him with this breach in curio-shopping etiquette.

"If," I said, "you stick on the price upon whatever I pick out, I shan't consider myself bound by my offer. I shall make a price for a number of things, and just take what I like of them. Then you won't know which I really want, and you will be unable to overcharge me. But this," I added magnificently, "takes time, and I do not wish to waste time on this sort of thing. You will drive me to a shop that wishes to do business."

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He made Oriental dumb protest, and then we resumed, and I bought from Abdallah that silver hand of Fatma, soft with purity; a noble old fibula of heavily chased silver set with mountain garnets; an antique silver ring set with an engraved turquoise made by some silver-smith in Ispahan; old Bedouin earrings—silver hoops, hung with tiny silver rings and bells and big enough for bangles; a Bedouin breast-chain hung from fibulæ, a mass of charms and little silver chains round one fine silver boss set with a bit of verde-antico which had once been a mosaic in some Roman pavement in the desert; and so forth—pretty well his whole stock of any ornaments for a woman's person which were silver, Arabic, and old.

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Photo by Garrigues, Tunis.

A HAREM WINDOW, AND PILLARS FROM ANCIENT CARTHAGE.

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CHAPTER VI

THE BAZARS (continued)

THERE are two interesting jewellery souks in Tunis in the bazar—the Souk of the Silversmiths and the old Slave Market, where the wholesale dealers in gems hold their sales—when they do. The silver-workers' souk is a snare and a disappointment to bargain-hunters, for Arab silver jewellery is dear, not cheap, as it is of standard purity and weighed by the master of the souk (who also, if desired, decides if the estimates for workmanship be fair), in the presence of vendor and purchaser. The Arab puts his money into jewellery as a species of savings bank, so the more valuable it is the better it suits him.

The fibula brooches, hands of Fatma, bangles, and so on, the pretty American girl, who has such a shrewd notion of bargains, is likely to pass by. They are new here, and she has seen plenty of them second-hand in the cheap-jack shops of the Rue d'Église; but I have seen more than one of them price the massive, fetter-like anklets, which you hardly see for sale except in this souk, and then turn away in

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disgust when she found that a pair of these novel playthings would cost several gold pieces.

The very attitude of the silver-workers to foreigners is tell-tale. When you go into their queer little dens, which generally consist of a sort of ante-room with locked-up cases round the walls, separated by a counter from the proprietor's own seat and the lockers in which he keeps the articles most asked for, they are almost too bored to show you their wares. They know that you want an article that makes a good effect but is only a thin silver shell, and they wish to sell solid pieces of silver put into the form of jewellery.

The old Slave Market where the wholesale jewel-merchants, who come from a distance, hold a species of auction, is one of the most picturesque spots in the bazar. It is triangular in shape, and surrounded by arches resting on ancient columns. There are benches for the use of the merchants, and a good deal of sunlight streams in here to checker the cool shadows of the bazar.

This is not to be confused with the sort of fondouk or inn used for the sale of slaves, with two rows of cells behind the arcades of columns from old Carthage, the upper story being used for men and the lower for women. One of the columns was put to a curious use, and there are plenty of people yet alive who can remember its use in a modified form. Like many

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classical columns in North Africa, its capital has a pattern standing out, with the stone-work between cut away, leaving a sort of ring. By this column the slave for sale was stationed. In more recent times the slaves put one finger through the ring as a token; in ancient times their hands were chained to it.

It is, of course, some time now since slaves were sold openly in Tunis, but it is no secret that the rich Arabs continue to buy beautiful slaves for their harems. By legal fiction the contract for the purchaser is made out in the form of a marriage contract, with so much money to be handed over to the vendor. But there was almost a scandal in Tunis when, quite recently, a wealthy and well-known Arab, who dresses like a Frenchman and lives almost like a Frenchman, and sees a great deal of the French, bought not one but two slaves in this way.

I have yet to describe some of the most notable souks, such as the souk where they make chéchias; and the souks of the saddlers and shoemakers and copper-sellers; the little souks of the booksellers —such a very little one, as if their craft were not much needed—and of the charm-makers. I shall perhaps give a descriptive chapter to the schools and cafés and Turkish baths, and the barbers and provision-sellers, who have no special souk of their own, but are to be found wherever they are wanted.

The making of chéchias, the conical red caps with

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black tassels which in England suggest an Oriental vagabond, but form the basis of all head-gear in the Mahometan East, would appear to be a declining industry. I daresay fezes form one of the numerous imports which flow into Tunis from Manchester. When you learn that, as I mentioned above, in the old palmy days before time mattered, quite common Arabs spent as much on a fez as a stockbroker used to spend on a panama, you are not surprised that the old-established hatter is losing his custom. Arabs think a little more of time now that they have taken to wearing Waterburys, though they do not use trams as a means of saving time, but as a means of spending it. When an Arab has nothing else to do, he goes in a tram, just as the Sicilian registers a letter or an Englishman buys a newspaper.

The decline of the chéchia-makers is shown by the rows of hat-presses abandoned to dry rot which line their souk, looking like the great oak wine-presses they used to have in Lombardy. But there are still a few conscientious workmen making chéchias in the time-honoured way. No one would recognise the little, close-fitting red fez in its first stage—a mass of soft white wool three times the proper size, which has to be shrunk into a close felt and carded to smoothness with teazels (real vegetable teazels of the kind which grow with nettles and docks and other low members of the vegetable kingdom

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in England), before they are consigned to the dye-pot.

I cannot understand why they should take so much trouble over making a chéchia. A two-guinea one looks noticeably better than a shilling or eighteen-penny one, but not noticeably better than a five-shilling one, though I am sure it lasts a lifetime ; but as the Arabs don't care about a thing unless it is expensive, the makers had no incentive to shorten the process. Their shops are destitute of interesting machinery, for everything is done by hand with the simplest appliances, on a par with the vegetable teazels.

The Souk of the Chéchia-makers bears a strong resemblance to a graveyard, because the wooden posts on which they are shrunk are naturally of the shape of a turban, the most popular form of tombstone in Mahometan countries, and the press is rather funereal, too.

Close to the souk of the men who provide for the outside of the head is that of those who make provision for its inside, the booksellers. They never seem to be doing any business, and often cut the same ludicrous figure as the Japanese bookseller cuts. My dragoman in the bazar questioned the whole row of them without success about an old book which I had bought, because I thought its cover would make an effective piece of furniture in my Moorish room.

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When I found that not one of them could read it, I was strongly reminded of my experiences in Kyoto, where I bought a beautiful little book with delicate illustrations on very thick paper, meaning to use the backs of the pages, which are always blank in Japanese books, for mounting Kodaks. When I had bought it I thought it looked rather too good for such an ignoble end. So I made my riksha-boy, who spoke English, stop at all the booksellers' shops we passed to know whom it was by; but we did not strike anybody who could read the classical characters in which it was written till we got back to the hotel, where the landlord informed me that my own bedroom boy was a Samurai, and very learned and quite an authority on old picture-books.

One wonders how long it will be before the Germans will be unable to read their German characters, with which we were tortured in our youth when we were learning German "as she is taught" in English public schools.

Books are as scarce in the Souk of the Booksellers as they are in Ireland. I don't think I saw any shop which contained as many as a hundred, and when I took a particular fancy to a book—which I confess was always based upon its shape or the general Eastern gaudiness of its cover—its shopkeeper invariably refused to sell it. The dragoman attributed it to my being an unbeliever and the volumes being

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sacred. Perhaps prayerbooks and Korans are the only kind of literature that sell in the bazar. The thing I noticed most was that the Arab bookseller, like the Japanese, arranges his books in vertical, not horizontal shelves, or at any rate vertically, not horizontally.

Not far from the Souk of the Booksellers is a little souk with two or three shops engaged in an extraordinary business—that of making ornaments of a black substance resembling ebony. It is not ebony at all, but a black paste made of certain virtuous ingredients which remind you of the Chinese pharmacopeia by their inappropriateness; for they are chiefly herbs, and the little horns and so on, into which they are compressed, are used, not as medicines, for which they might conceivably be of some use, but as charms.

The odd thing is that these very Oriental talismans are displayed for sale in about the most European-looking shops in the whole bazar—shops that have regular windows, an almost unheard-of thing.

The last souk on this side of the bazar is one of those in which Europeans take most interest and leave most money, the famous Souk of the Saddlers. In getting to it you pass through the souk in which they embroider the balloony breeches of the women and the waistcoats of the young

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Arabs with gold lace. I think it must be in the hands of Jews, because you are always pressed to purchase, as if any other human being could find any conceivable use for these leg-encasements of female behemoths, though they might be cut in half and used to cover the humps of the camels, instead of the door-matting in vogue for that purpose.

The Souk or Street of the Saddlers—the Rue des Selliers—is fascinating, but it reminds you more of Regent Street fancy stationers than of the London Street of Saddlers behind St. Martin's Lane; for its denizens deal very little in honest pigskin. Red, yellow, and green goat edged with white kid, and decked with spangles and bits of looking-glass, cross-stitching, and cowries, give the tone to this souk, and a very brilliant tone it is.

In the centre of it there are a few saddlers to license the name; and very fine shops they have, too, with their high-peaked crimson saddles and gorgeous brass mountings of plates and charms, and all the other paraphernalia which make the Arab cavalier of modern Tunis look as if he had ridden out of the Alhambra four hundred years ago.

What a beautiful creature he is on his Arab barb, high-throned on a saddle glowing with gilt and crimson, sitting erect and still as a dart, with his feet thrust into barbaric stirrups and his

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Photo by Garrigues, Tunis.

AN ARAB ON HIS ARAB.

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white burnous flowing from his shoulders over the quarters of his noble beast. His shapely, olive-tinted face, with its classical features and its expression of the heir of all the ages, is becomingly curtained in white, and his hands still sometimes clasp a matchlock, with its barrel damascened in silver and its stock like a sword-hilt inlaid with mother-of-pearl. But alas, it must be confessed that he often spoils the effect by his tendency to thrust his long riding-boots of crimson morocco into goloshes, though the Arab is not a golosh-haunter, like the Turk.

But the smaller saddlers' shops are mostly innocent of saddlery; they sell more hats than saddles, and hats to which the world can produce no rivals, even in Mexico. Like the hats worn by the coolies who carry your chair or pull your riksha in Hong-Kong, they are a yard across; but instead of being flatter than bread-pan lids they have crowns a foot or two high, being almost the shape, if three times the size of a cowboy's hat. They come from the saddlers' souk because they are decorated with huge leather leaves.

Apart from hats the average saddler in the souk confines himself to a sort of fancy stationery. He is very great, for instance, on circular mirrors the size of an Osborn biscuit sewn up in crimson leather, with gay stitching and tags of worsted, for which he finds a penny a remunerative price. He revels in bags, mostly on the same principle, though

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some are small enough and simple enough for a chatelaine, and others are large enough and brilliant enough for the sabretache of a hussar officer on the boards of Daly's theatre.

You can get these bags and sabretaches all in russet-brown or the three primary colours of goat's-skin, red, green and yellow, the larger ones being edged with white kid and laced with silver thread, and all of them stuffed out with leather parings to give them a good figure.

Rug-straps of crimson morocco are very inviting. Little white Greek purses, accordion-pleated and looking as if they were made for carrying spare mantles for the incandescent gas, slung on bootlaces, are hard to resist, and the Kohl boxes, sheathed in rose kid with silver lacings and green and white pompons, would do for the hunting-knife of a Sioux chief.

I cannot enumerate all the delightful bits of the Orient, royal in line and colour, in which this souk abounds. It goes straight to the heart of all those who love art better than Waring. In Tunis you feel inclined to skip with the little hills, and to cry with Browning, "What's become of Waring?" It is such a relief to get away from the stiff British idea of splendour, and to find yourself in a place where you can buy form and colour, charmingly expressed, in an article that only costs coppers.

Colour is of course the predominant note in the

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Souk of the Saddlers. The goat is not lovely in life, though I do not belittle what she does with her milk ; but Saul and Jonathan were not lovelier in their lives than she is when she has terminated her useful career, and her skin assumes a brilliant lemon or pomegranate tint, which makes the footpaths like rainbows.

The bazar is edged with leather on both sides, for at almost the farthest point from the Souk of the Saddlers is the Souk of the Shoemakers, a long, long winding narrow street which always recalls to me the bazar of the shoemakers at Athens, where I began that transient friendship with two American officers, charming boys who were going round the world in one of those frigates with which Uncle Sam used to play at having a navy less than twenty years ago.

They were of the type which New England produces so well—tall, straight-limbed, clean-featured men with rather puritanical eyes, favourite models of Gibson in his golf sketches, and a villain of a guide was trying to make them pay about three times the proper price for pairs of Greek slippers with red leather soles and tufts on their toes. Thinking that the pockets of the youthful American naval officer might be no better lined than the pockets of most of ours, I interfered, and we struck up rather a friendship. They were going to be in Athens as long as we were. We arranged to do something on the next day, I forget what,

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but I think it was to see an open-air performance in the temple of the Olympian Zeus. Late that night one of them rushed in, in a wild hurry, to explain that they were to sail in the small hours of the morning.

An American missionary at Smyrna had been trying to convert the ladies of a harem, and the population proposed to lynch him. He had taken refuge somewhere, and the American consul had wired for the frigate, which had been expecting at least a fortnight at the Piræus to enjoy the sights of Athens. "And the worst of it all is," said my friends, "that we can't possibly arrive in time to be any good, because our ship can only steam ten knots."

She did arrive too late, but fortunately a big British man-of-war came to Smyrna quite by chance twenty-four hours earlier, and though the feelings of the United States towards Great Britain at that time were by no means friendly, the English captain landed a party of marines and brought the missionary off. But the frigate did not return to the Piræus.

The Souk of the Shoemakers is nothing like so attractive as the Souk of the Saddlers, though it winds picturesquely, and a goat's skin of the Arab yellow, before it is cut up, is a splendid sheet of colour. The shops are not very picturesque; the Arab cobbler does not strike good attitudes, and the shoes in the souk are coarsely made for the use of the poorer classes.

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It is difficult for English people to understand why the poor Arabs who trudge about the streets in all weathers should select bright yellow, and to a considerable extent bright green or purple shoes, sewn with silver braid and ornamented with gay silk pompons, for their foot-gear. But it is not more remarkable than the fact that they always buy them so much too short that the heel comes under the middle of the instep. Though twice too short they are twice too large—in fact, they hardly fit at all ; but the Arab turns down the back of his shoe under his instep, and however much too short and too large his shoe is for him, keeps it on without effort and walks with grace. As they hang on the walls of the souk shops, these pairs of yellow and green and violet hair-tidies—for that is what they look like and are really adapted for—make the street a kaleidoscope of colour.

The high-class Arab does not patronise this souk, where even a foreigner could buy a pair of shoes for half-a-crown.

Not far from the cobblers' souk is that of the coppersmiths, always a favourite with foreigners, for it lies directly on the Rue de la Kasbah route to the French city, and its inhabitants deal more in second-hand articles than any others in the bazar. As a copper-workers' street it is much inferior to the Via Calderai in Palermo. But we bought there some of the most treasured articles we carried back from

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Tunis to adorn our Moorish room,—to wit, the seven-fold brazen breast-chain with chased end-pieces and a charm against the evil eye, which had hung in front of some proudly caparisoned charger—the safe-guard against the evil eye being a crescent formed of two boars' tusks, joined with a brass socket, from which was suspended a brazen hand of Fatma.

Item :—A brazen food-carrier with four dishes, each of the top three fitting into and making a lid for the dish below, in shape a cross between a vegetable dish and an oval saucepan ; an idea almost the exact counterpart of the Japanese chow-box, or the tiny *porte-médecine*—portable medicine-chest of lacquer which is to be found in so many English collections of Japanese curios. This beautiful piece of brass-work, with a series of inverted domes, was no longer available for cooking, the iron bottom designed to stand fire having succumbed to air and water ; so I only paid five francs for it, which the dragoman said was at least twice too much.

Item :—A fine brass ball and crescent once carried by the soldiers of the Bey on a regimental standard.

Item :—A quart pot designed like our pewters, lid and all, but with the lid of a plain dome shape and the handle of a simple curve, instead of the flourish and hollow which we affect in our modern pewters, though the silver flagons of seventeenth-century Oxford have the Moorish simplicity. Polished

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up, the brazen quart pot bought for four francs looks as if it were part of the gold plate of the Mansion House.

Item :—Two brazen vessels looking like tall, slim coffee-pots, with the long, snake snakey spouts curved like the back of a cobra when he is sitting up, and almost as fine as the nozzle of a sewing-machine oil-can. These two things of beauty, which would be the making of a Moorish picture for the Royal Academy, held the essences dear to water-drinking nations, and are a sermon in curves.

But I must not make an inventory of my brass furniture, for I bought smaller and odder prizes in the Souk of the Copper-workers when the second-hand stalls were spread about the street,—to wit, a brass conventionalised fish which has an early Christian inspiration, if it does not go back to early Christian times; and a bag made of the skin of a great lizard, with its head and tail chopped off—its legs are left on, and make it look like the mummy of a baby. Of hands of Fatma I bought quite a collection in every process of conventionalisation, in silver, brass, and a heavy kind of pewter; and of amulets a rather important series.

Unfortunately, I only got to time these stalls correctly towards the end of my visit, or I could almost have started a new museum, like the collection of a couple of hundred terra-cottas from Girgenti and

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Selinunte and Carthage before the Christian era, which fill the glazed recess in my Moorish room.

The copper-workers puzzled me, in one way. They appeared to be Arabs and they did not tout, but they bargained like Jews.

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Photo by Garrigues, Tunis.

POTTERY SHOPS IN THE BAB-SOUIKA.

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CHAPTER VII

THE SIGHTS OF THE BAZARS

ALLUSION has already been made to the street auctions of the bazar and the touts who pursue you with a garment or two to ask how much you will give for it. I now come to a fresh class of touts, who spring from the common desire of the Tunisian nature to be a guide. Even the Arab is not proof against the seduction of this profession, for which the standard wage is five francs a day, often raised by grateful foreigners and supplemented by presents and commissions.

Even if it were not so lucrative it would have its attractions, for the English who come to Tunis are mostly of some importance—at any rate well-off, and with the ladies in their families well-dressed and elegant. In other words, it is the Riviera-going English who go to Tunis—a class profitable to guides and conferring pleasure and distinction by their company. This is exactly what the Arab likes—he has an aristocratic soul.

It is possible that they will come to Tunis with

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their eye on a particular dragoman, deserving or undeserving, who has been employed by some friend. Failing this, they are likely to fall a prey to the hotel guide, sure to be a Jew or a Maltese, and nearly sure to be a mere commission-hunter, with no knowledge of Arab antiquities or customs, but full of as many languages as a polyglot Bible.

But if the sunburnt Englishman, with his correct tie and boots and his well-pressed tweeds, and his daughters, with their expensive tailor-made gowns and upright figures, have hired no dragoman and have the usual British distrust of the hotel guide, their appearance in the bazar will be the signal for a general tout reminding me of the "general post," which was the most popular parlour game of my infancy.

As the family passes up the Rue d'Église the Jews spring out of their curio-shops with their "no charge for admission"—and, if unsuccessful, pursue the chase with glib boys talking magpie English. Their presence and excitement draws the attention of a fresh class of touts, from whom they slink away—Arabs of sorts, who, being Mahometan by religion, feel that they have a right to spurn a Jew. Experience has taught them that the Tunisian *djebba*, (the sort of cassock of crimson and green brocade which is the national garment, though it is so little worn) impresses foreigners.

They advance in skirmishing order. The English-

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man closes his ranks and fixes his bayonets; he has heard so much about guides being superfluous in the bazar, and increasing the price of everything you buy; and if he cannot speak French, he is tolerably safe from their assaults, for hardly any of them can speak English.

But if he replies to them in French they at once show the wisdom of the serpent, and tell him that they have no connection with any shop; that he can just give them a franc when he leaves the bazar, and they will show him all over it—the marabout café, the Turkish baths, the Slave Market, the Palace of the Bey, the Souk of the Silversmiths, the Rue des Selliers—everything.

The Englishman persists in his refusal to have anything to do with the tout, and protests continually while the tout leads the way, officiously brushing away Jews and Bedouins and beggars; modestly pointing out the outside of mosques; officially proclaiming the names of the souks; indicating with skilled inadvertence the perfumer, the curio-shop-keeper, the silversmith with whom the Englishman should deal if he ever chanced to buy anything in the bazar.

Some few foreigners escape without succumbing to this son of the old serpent, but the majority sooner or later melt before his attentiveness; or he may have a piece of luck, such as a Jew or a beggar calling out something insolent. Far from showing any

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hesitancy about taking the law into his own hands, he will jump at the opportunity (and the offender), and, in his rôle of rescuer, will perhaps become guide to the party, not only for the day but for their entire stay in Tunis.

We fell into the hands of such a bazar-runner, an Arab with a strong dash of the negro in him, whose name was Mohammed. He made himself really useful to us, for Bachir had not yet returned to Tunis. Mohammed could talk French fluently; he had been to a French school. It was he who told us about the Night of the Prophet, and piloted us with great care through one or two quarrelsome crowds, and soothed the populace when they objected forcibly to our watching a reading of the Koran.

One day we determined to give him his head and see what he would show us. He did not take us up the Rue d'Église, but by tramway to the Bab-Menara—a very interesting way, because it takes you along a street full of Arab life and lands you near the Souk of the Saddlers, where there is always something to bargain for as you pass. The saddlers must have a Jewish streak in them, for they call out as you pass by, and come down in their prices.

The Bab-Menara is one of the old Moorish gates of the city. It has a small hole in it in which the good saint lived, and a smaller hole in which the faithful put offerings for her. I forget what is done

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Photo by Garrigues, Tunis.

ENTRANCE TO THE SOUK OF THE SADDLERS.

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with them. Her grave is not far off, a favourite object with kodakers, for it is under a spreading tree at the entrance of the saddlers' souk, a low doorway in the rock which reminds you of the way they keep a spring under lock and key in Devonshire. He flung the door open with a readiness which I did not expect his fanaticism to have permitted. It then looked like a London dust-hole.

It was Friday. We had not gone far into the souk before we came upon another tomb, quite plain and shaped like a coffin, lying in the middle of the street. It belonged to a very holy saint who had expressed his wish to be buried in the middle of the traffic, not having a sufficiently prophetic soul to anticipate that the street would be so frequented by unbelievers. The faithful had been making offerings at it, as they always do on a Friday. It had a tall flag-staff standing on each side of it, and offerings of fire and water and lighted candles, all emblematic, as the guide explained at considerable length without telling us anything intelligible.

He felt that he had made a good beginning, and put on a more beautiful smile and a more confident manner.

The Bedouins are not a religious people. Though it was Friday, the Mahometan Sabbath, they had swarmed into the bazar, some to buy and some to sell. The first was evident, because we found hawkers selling

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the white-metal jewellery with which they load themselves, mostly bracelets which look like napkin-rings, fibula brooches, and breast-ornaments, with seven little chains suspending charms like the fish and the hand of Fatma. There were also a few pairs of heavy anklets on the trays, though I do not remember seeing any Bedouin women wearing anklets. Perhaps they are too busy, for the Bedouin women, except those who beg in the bazar, have to support a husband. This jewellery is not costly ; we bought up a whole trayful and a good deal of change for a ten-franc piece.

While we were negotiating this a splendid individual came along, black with heat and dust and almost buried in one of those enormous desert hats. He was anxious to sell us four cushions without any stuffing, made of leather, with the red, yellow, and black linoleum-pattern on them of which the Bedouins are so fond. Three were round and one was shaped like a dice-box. He wanted six francs each for them. The guide said they were dirt cheap at that, and that the man did not understand bargaining ; but he understood fast enough when I held up a twenty-franc piece and pointed at all four, and scowled at the idea that I should think him a person who would bargain. But he ran after us very quickly, when he saw me taking my gold piece away unconcernedly, and laid those empty cushions on my

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arm. The guide said that the Bedouins carry their clothes about in them as cushion-stuffing. Creases do not signify on Bedouin clothes. He suggested crumpled-up newspapers as a a good equivalent, and said that the newspapers of Tunis were quite good for this purpose.

Which reminds me of one of the best *mots* that I ever heard. It was made by the late Bishop of London when he was asked to propose the toast of journalism, coupled with the name of the representative of the *Times*. The Bishop said he did not know much about newspapers—that they were all the same to him, except in their degree of suitability for wrapping up shooting-boots; but that, judged by this standard, he considered the *Times* the best paper.

We passed on along a souk in which the whole street echoed with invitations to us to buy Jewish women's white satin breeches, embroidered with gold lace at several pounds a pair. We were deaf to the suggestion, and eventually found ourselves in the Souk of the Fez-makers, deserted except for funereal hat-presses and a ragged, dirty person who was selling palm-wine. The chéchia-makers were far too good Mahometans to work on a Friday. The palm-wine seller sat on a broken-down press, looking like Marius on the ruins of Carthage. I longed to taste palm-wine. I had heard so much of negroes getting jollified with it, but reflected how likely it was to disagree with me;

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and Miss Lorimer, who will try all kinds of food and drink as gaily as a monkey takes poison, was not with us. I regretted it all the more because he carried the muddy fluid in a calabash. I felt that he was behaving with absolute propriety, but the guide thought we were lowering ourselves by taking so much interest in such a low-down person, and hurried us on.

We had not been lucky, for just off the Souk of the Perfumers we came upon Miss Lorimer and an Englishman, who took no interest in anything in Tunis except in the French cafés on the boulevard where they had string bands after dinner, and in trying new foods and drinks. He would have been splendid for palm-wine; he might even have tried if it were possible to get drunk on it.

When we came upon them they were having as animated an argument as was possible, without a common language, with one of the few women stall-keepers in the bazar. The Englishman without a soul wished to taste a pink substance contained in a big sweet-shop jar with a brass top; it looked like raspberry syrup, only a little thinner. What it was he was incapable of learning from the proprietor; only one thing was clear, that she considered it unwholesome for him, or him unwholesome for it, for nothing could persuade her to let him taste it. It did not strike me as being at all the most interesting delicacy on this bazar-lady's stall.

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There was some stuff which looked like lemonade with snow upon the top, that I took to be the sherbet you read about in Sir Walter Scott's *Talisman*, whose appearance really did inspire me; and the lemonade pure and simple, beside it, was poured through a contrivance which I always wanted to buy, but I never found a shop that sold them. It was like a close-fitting brass lid with a hollow brazen horn coming out of it, and if you were skilful in pouring fluid into a glass at the distance of about a yard, you could make an arc as lovely as the sacred bridge at Nikko.

Sponge cakes and macaroons and Swiss *meringues*, where the white of egg and sugar go inside and pretend to be cream instead of performing their proper functions of being crust, and nougat, filled the front of the stall, with cakes undreamed of in our pastrycook's philosophy, made of honey and figs and pomegranate seeds and almonds. The beignets had a stall to themselves, they were so popular; they form a cross between a croisson and a dough-nut fried in oil. But we hardly saw one proper restaurant, with coppers of savoury kous-kouss, and fried wild artichokes looking like a land variety of sea-urchins, in the whole bazar, though they abound in the other Arab quarters.

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CHAPTER VIII

THE SIGHTS OF THE BAZARS (continued)

OUR negritic guide was great on schools, of which he spoke in a pitying way. He had himself been educated in a French school. But he also pitied us because we were only Christians, and, as such, precluded from going into Mahometan schools—at all events, those which were located in mosques past and present.

There is another kind of school which reminds one of the little kindergarten in a basso of the high street in Taormina, endeared to every tourist for the graceful young mistress, who teaches the tiny dots committed to her care as if they were her dearest playthings. We had almost an adventure over one of these. At the top of the steep wooden ladder-stair, of the kind the Orient finds sufficient from Tunis to Tokio, we heard the hum of small voices. Why are little children always taught in choruses?

The teacher saw us and beckoned us up. His charges squatted round him in a horseshoe with their shoes neatly arranged on the floor behind them,

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learning to repeat texts of the Koran with the right pronunciation. They were the dearest little people imaginable, beautifully dressed—the Arabs love to make fashion-plates of their children—and they had the same dark wondering eyes and clear damask complexions as little Japanese children, but much better figures. Little Arabs are as graceful as little foxes.

We had just noticed that the room was almost destitute of furniture or decoration when we heard a row in the street. A fanatical person wished to drag us down, and the negritic guide was throwing him about; but as a good Mahometan, he himself objected to our presence in a Mahometan school, and applied bustling moral pressure.

I showed him that I was not pleased. He understood that I was not likely to employ again a guide whose scruples would prevent me from seeing anything that luck threw in my way. This worked on his feelings. He knew that I was writing a book, and could include or exclude his name. He plumed himself upon the idea that he was practically writing the book. He also liked our party because one of the ladies could speak French fluently and had a wild desire to learn and try anything Arabic, from the pronunciation of their gutturals to the effect of *hashish*, so he ruminated, as we went along, as to how he could regain my favour. He threw out hints.

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What should I like? I said I should like to see another school, because I wished to test the genuineness of his repentance. He made an honest and indirectly successful attempt to oblige me.

Nearly opposite the chief Turkish bath in the bazar every foreigner who passes is attracted by a beautiful ancient building, with a lofty porch carried on antique columns and a broad flight of steps leading up to an old stilted arch of black and white marble. The door is generally open, showing that it is neither house nor mosque, though from what you see of the interior it might be either. Just inside the door is a lofty vaulted passage with stone benches carried on elegant little Moorish arches for the watchmen to recline on, and beyond that is a fine court surrounded by an arcade of the usual black and white arches. One or two handsome young students were sailing across the courtyard.

"Is this a school?" I asked.

"Yes, monsieur. Perhaps we might get in here. I will seek the head and say that you are writing a book," he said.

He did not find the head, but he found a sufficiently influential person who gave a grudging half-permission, and we entered. We were not shown anything, but we were told we might peep into the various rooms opening off the court. There were a few cheap board-school desks in some of them, and various linen

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Photo by Garrigues, Tunis.

AN OLD ARAB HOUSE.

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rolls with Arabic characters on them hanging on the walls. They of course conveyed nothing to us, and unfortunately nothing to our guide, because he could not read his own language, though he could read French. The time may not be far off when New Japan is unable to read Japanese except in English characters.

There really was only one room which was the least interesting. It was lined with soft matting and divided up by rather graceful columns and arches, while at one end there was a recess shaped like a tiny apse, inside a Moorish arch, richly decorated. After a careful study of it from the outside I suddenly became aware that we had been having a very good look at a mosque, the only one we ever saw at Tunis, where it is inexorably forbidden for an unbeliever to behold them. We had erred in all innocence, and the officials, who were too bored to show us round the school, were fortunately too bored to notice. The guide said nothing this time, but I saw the look in his eyes, and made my party beat a strategical retreat in the shortest possible time, just pausing to examine the lovely old turquoise-blue arabesqued tiles of the courtyard.

To wash away the stain, he took us into the most effective physical cleanser known to civilisation, a Turkish bath. The best *hammam* in Tunis is just opposite. Of course, the ladies did not penetrate

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into its arcana, though it is no worse than a Japanese public bath for mixed sexes, which all foreigners try and see, and is much prettier. To enter it you go through an elaborate barber's shop.

The barbers' shops of Tunis are things of beauty and joy throughout your stay. Their exteriors are often extremely handsome, consisting of screens of carved and gilded woodwork as fine as the *mashrabeyah* of harems. Inside, padded benches line both walls, higher and wider than chairs and not so high or wide as tables. On these the patients sit while the barbers shave them—very often their heads, as well as their faces.

The walls above are decorated, like the armoury in the Tower of London, with choice designs made of the implements of the trade, such as razors and various brazen vessels and shaving basins and cupping dishes, and mirrors of the old Carthaginian shape, but backed with a glittering veneer of mother-of-pearl or dark, hard wood like walnut, inlaid with bone and mother-of-pearl and ebony, like the almonds of hard-bake. Where the pattern is made entirely of mother-of-pearl the backs are often very beautiful, for the Tunisian Arabs understand how to harmonise the various opalescent tints to be found in what the French call *nacre*.

I do not think that the cupping dishes are much used, for the barbers, though unusually important

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personages in Tunis and used habitually as the go-betweens in delicate matters like *mariages de convenance*, do not apparently take the place of doctors.

I was very disappointed in the razors. Various people, more or less scholarly, asserted that they had seen razors of the old Carthaginian hatchet-shape in barbers' shops, no longer in use but not so very long obsolete. I tried in vain to get a sight of one. I never saw them using anything but ordinary European razors. Most of the barbers dress as if they were fully conscious of their importance.

The proprietor of the Turkish bath made no objection to the entrance of ladies, though it was not a ladies' day. His establishment was worthy of Granada in all its glory. No sooner were we inside the door than we saw upon our right hand a gilded cage, almost all taken up with a broad bench covered with a rich soft carpet, and strewn with luxurious Oriental cushions of blue brocade. This was a sort of private box for the wealthy to use, while they were recovering from the exhaustion of the bath, and accustoming themselves to the temperature of the rude airs outside.

Walking past this, we entered the main hall, a lofty, domed, and richly gilt and decorated chamber. This had broad benches on each side, resting on low Moorish arches of white marble. There is more than ornamentation in these pretty

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little arcades under the benches for reclining on, which are such a feature of Arab buildings. Here, where there were a couple of dozen Arabs lying on the benches recovering animation after their bath, there were as many pairs of slippers standing in the little arches under them. The Arab, like the Japanese, is fond of taking off his shoes as he enters.

The men lying on benches looked like so many corpses. Some of them had the decency to have their faces covered as corpses should, but the bulk of them lay stiff and white and with glazed eyeballs, like the bodies which come out of the water at the Paris Morgue. They looked strangely out of keeping with that gorgeous apartment, which had a marabout dome and charming green and gold panels, and deep carpets on its pure white marble benches. In the centre was a graceful fountain. It was like a bit of the Alhambra; it might have given one an idea of the luxuriousness of the baths of Caracalla, in ancient Rome. Pompeii has preserved nothing so splendid.

Only two things spoilt the air of ancient Rome and Granada in its prime. One was that the proprietor was fond of canaries in very British cages, and the other that his patrons were fond of soda-water in very British bottles with ball stoppers, which they left with their slippers in the pigeon-holes while they

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were enjoying their trance. The proprietor might have been an Italian instead of a good Mahometan, he was so fond of hanging pots of flowering cloves at every vantage-point. Leading off this chamber were the private rooms, whose privacy he was perfectly willing to break on my behalf, and the hot room, where naked Arab gentlemen loosely wrapped in sheets were being kneaded and scraped by Ethiopians. It was kept by one Mohammed ben Shedli.

Our guide suggested that we should wind up with the marabout café in the bazar, the most famous in all Tunis. As we were making our way down to it we came across what was afterwards a common sight to us—a gang of prisoners being marched down to the prison of the Bey at the entrance of the bazar. There were no villainous-looking people among them, and some were quite respectable and nicely dressed people. They were fastened in couples with a chain padlocked tightly round their wrists, and each couple was fastened by a longer piece of chain to the couple in front and the couple behind.

They were allowed to talk and laugh as they pleased, and did not seem in the least depressed by wearing chains in public, and by the prospect of being in a prison, where no one would feed them unless their friends remembered to bring them food. But prison life in Tunis has its compensations, for the authorities have no crude British objection to prisoners

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smoking. Their relatives are welcome to bring them anything they please and hand it through the window.

We missed a pretty Bedouin woman from her accustomed place in the bazar, and a day or two afterwards found her shivering and crying and begging for bread outside the prison in which her husband was locked up. She gave all the bounty she received to him, and foreigners would so much rather have given it to her for herself.

The marabout café in which we eventually found ourselves was a most curious place. It was built as a marabout's tomb, and the graves are still in it, fine ones with turbans. A long passage with an arcading of ancient columns on one side, occupied with the usual watchmen's benches, led into a large chamber full of columns and arches, painted red and green and looking quite like a mosque. The centre of this ancient chamber, which seemed as if it might once have formed the courtyard, was occupied by a sort of platform, on which groups of wealthy merchants were squatting in rings. They were passing round little pipes of *kif*, or playing cards with European packs, and of course drinking endless cups of coffee.

This café was full of local colour. The Arab gentleman who was sitting next to us, and with the politeness of his race offered us the pipe of *kif* which he was sharing with his friends, was dressed with a great elegance; but the arm which came out of his fine

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burnous to hand us the pipe was bare and tattooed with a sword, a fish with an egg inside it, a merman, and his own name of Ali—for luck.

All round the walls are hung pictures far more childish than the pastels rubbed upon the pavement by London street-artists. They represent Mecca, Cairo, St. George and the "Lion," a ship, and, goodness knows why, rich and poor Jews. We went in and ordered our coffee. The arrangement was extremely like that of a Japanese open-air tea-house, for it mostly consisted of benches, on which those who knew how to sit like Christians sat on the edge with their legs hanging down, and the rest, for whom the accommodation was designed, sat on the middle with their legs tucked up.

There is a little garden at the back, and in going through to it we passed three most interesting features. The first was a table, which always has flowers for the saint and a glass of cold water for the poor upon it.

It is none the less a saint's tomb on account of its being a café. There is a sort of ante-room beyond the café, like the ante-chapel they use for crusaders at the Temple Church. It contains three graves—low, coffin-shaped affairs with cylindrical head-stones. They have red and green wooden covers like mummy-cases, and flags waving above them. The café itself looks like a Palermo Arabo-Norman

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church, with its three and a half pairs of green pillars dividing it into bays. The pillars have, as usual, done duty at Carthage.

But before we got to the saint's tomb we had to pass the kitchen and the scullery. The kitchen itself looks like a scullery with a heap of glowing ashes on the sink. When coffee is wanted the cook blows the ashes into a red glow, and taking up a copper spoon with a flat head the size of a sixpence, puts as much coffee as he can pile on it into one of the little, long-handled tin saucepans, which look like churchwarden pipes and hold little more than a liqueur glass. I forget whether he adds hot water or cold; but anyhow, he thrusts the saucepan into the glowing ashes, and I believe goes through the orthodox formula of letting it come to the boil three times and whipping it off. You don't notice those things precisely—you are so much more interested in the number of cups he can handle at once when his customers are pressing. He looks as if he had half a wheel in his hand, for he can work about a dozen of these little saucepans at once, radiating evenly.

I ought to remember how much sugar they put in, but I can only repeat the words of the Wellington boy who was asked how many Spartans were killed at Thermopylæ, and as he did not remember the number, answered, "Nearly all." It was the same boy who, feeling in a similar state of uncertainty

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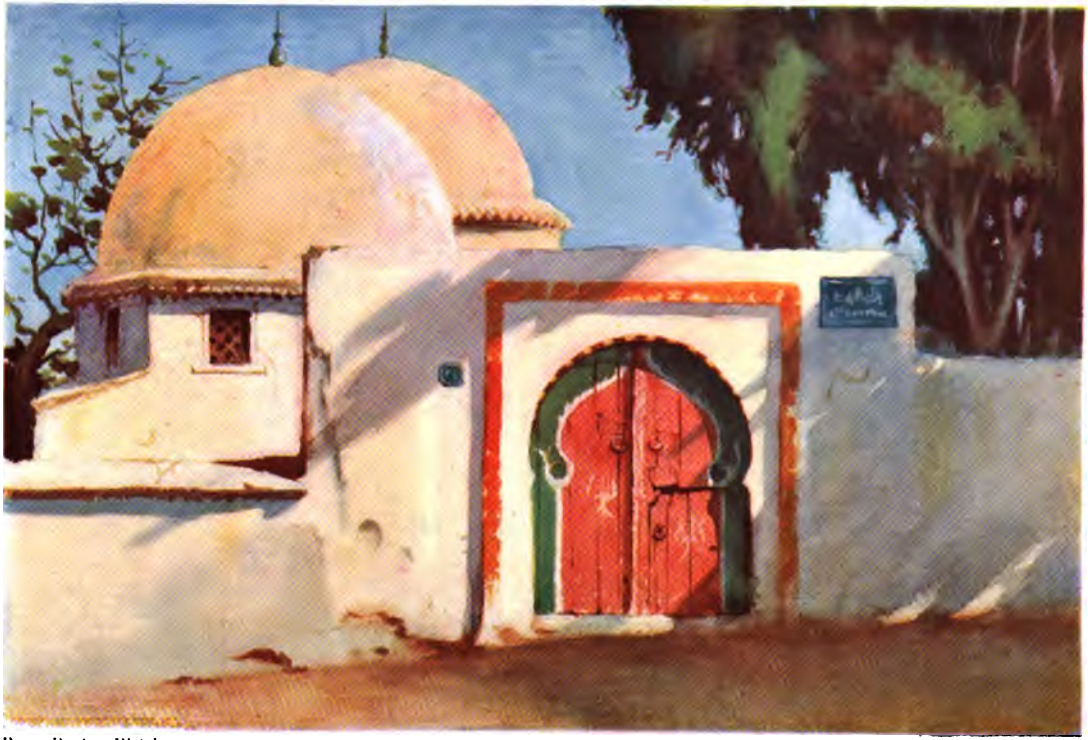

Pinx. Benton Fletcher.

A MARABOUT OR SAINT'S TOMB AT TUNIS.

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when he was asked which tribes of the Israelites lived "on the other side of Jordan," answered, "It depends which side you are." Coffee in a grand café like this costs a penny a cup; there is no getting it for a halfpenny because you are willing to go without a saucer.

In the East they sometimes seem to lose sight of the connection between cause and effect, except in vendettas. The coffee for these thimbly little cups was ground in an enormous mortar made out of the capital of a big Carthaginian column. Instead of grinding it with any clockwork contrivance, an Ethiopian was pounding it with a bar of steel weighing fifty pounds. Perhaps coffee has its flavour brought out by thrashing, like rump-steak. The dull thud-thud of that coffee-mortar would shake down a jerry-built house, but you hardly noticed it in that marabout's tomb, solidified by centuries.

In the garden there were some unhappy-looking sweet peas, stocks, pansies, nasturtiums, daisies, lilies, and snap-dragons, trying to do their best, but feeling the heat woefully. Otherwise they might have made a beautiful almshouse garden in the midst of all that hoary masonry. A fig-tree, with a rheumatic-looking trunk as thick as a man's body, sprawling octopus-arms over most of the garden, looked far more at home.

I was rather surprised to find that they had not a respectfully treated snake in that garden. It looked

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the sort of place that ought to have had one. At a little temple garden they were showing me in Canton, the thing they were proudest of was the snake that had come to live there of its own accord. I did not wait to see him.

By this time we were getting so contented with all the things he had shown us, that we did not feel as if we wished to see any more; but he told us that we must on no account miss the Sadiki Hospital. He said it was on the way to the Rue d'Église, which meant home, so we followed him meekly, intending when we got to the hospital to say that there was not time to go in. One gets very cunning in dealing with guides, who so often have misplaced enthusiasms.

But when we came to the entrance we changed our minds, for the approach lay through a long white court with the finest and shadiest tree in all Tunis, nearly robbing the upper half of its sky. We entered the hospital through the usual hall into the usual court, whose black and white looked cool and gracious. All the rooms opening off it were filled with little cubicles, occupied by Arabs in bed. There is nothing shocking about seeing a poor Arab in bed, for when the weather is warm he wears little more than a light shirt in the street, so that he is really more decent in bed, where he has a sheet over him as well.

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We did not see that school, because the authorities were too lukewarm about showing it to us. We did not see the hospital properly, because the authorities were so appallingly anxious to show us everything that we were afraid of losing our lunch; and there is a great sameness in hospitals, if you do not understand them.

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CHAPTER IX

THE NIGHT OF THE PROPHET IN THE BAZARS

ON almost any night of the year the bazar of Tunis is fit for nothing but murders and the secret society meetings of cats. There is hardly an unimprisoned human soul about. I speak literally, for the prison is the first thing you notice in the bazar. You pass through it as you come up from the town, though you see no more of it than a narrow vaulted passage, huge iron gratings, and huge Beylical soldiers. "Beylical" means nothing more than "belonging to the Bey." The French excel in flowery, I might almost say "feathery," adjectives.

There may be an attendant or two sleeping in the mosques, schools, and the *hammams* or Turkish baths, which they have at Tunis as well as at Earl's Court. The Sadiki Hospital hardly counts, for it is just on the fringe of the bazar. But the souks proper are absolutely deserted, the shops are hermetically shut, and each street is shut off by locked gates. Even outside the bazars the Arab shopkeeper lives away from his shop.

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On certain occasions, like the night of the Feast of the Prophet, or when there are illustrious strangers in the city whom Tunis delights to honour, the souks unbar their gates at night, and you have a glimpse of the *Arabian Nights*.

The effect is magical. The Yoshiwara in Tokyo is not so Oriental and of the ancient world.

If you are wise you will have ordered a good dragoman, like Bachir, to call for you at your hotel after dinner. You do not need him for protection or interpretation: Tunis is safer than Paris, and if you know a little French or Italian, should the person who is addressed not understand you, an eavesdropper flies to your assistance. The advantage of having a dragoman is that he will tell you what you ought not to miss, and where you are not forbidden to enter.

From the moment that you land in Tunis every one tells you that you may not enter a mosque. But if you are alone you will not have the courage to enter the famous Arab café in the saint's tomb. As you attempt it you are met by a hedge of stony stares from the Arabs, sitting like tailors on its benches. I never saw anything look so private as that café. But when Mohammed took us into it, we were met with the warmest Arab hospitality. Pipes of *kif* were thrust upon us, and smoking *kif* is like eating gold.

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On that Night of the Prophet Bachir did not take us up the Rue d'Église, the more ordinary route, but up the Rue de la Kasbah, from which the Ghetto, called at Tunis the "Hara," opens. The Jews had hit upon a splendid counter-attraction to the festivities of the Mahometans: they had a first-class fire, in such a place that with a little bad luck the whole of the bazars might have been involved in a conflagration. Bachir, who had a poor opinion of Jews, was convinced that they had done it on purpose, and was quite vexed when we thought it a feature of the evening. How they ever extinguished it was a mystery to me, for all their appliances were a hose, and two or three firemen on foot, and some soldiers with fixed bayonets. We left the Jews to the Providence in which they claim to have a monopoly, and yielded to Bachir's entreaties to proceed.

In truth we were not in a hurry, because, even in Tunis, in May the dusk lingers long, and we were in quest of the "Arabian Nights."

We found them.

The souks at Tunis, when illuminated, look like a work of the imagination. By day they are only vaulted passages with holes in their roofs, like the catacombs at Syracuse, through which the sun pours down on the flagged road, flanked on each side by rows of shops which look as if they had once been tombs.

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At night they can be turned into fairy-land; and it all seemed so easy. From the vaults hung numerous crystal chandeliers, really used for candles, and the shops had their own illuminations; and strings of fairy-lights, here, as in Suburbia, were festooned over your head. But they do not look suburban in the souks or in Japan, for they are Eastern in conception; they are primitive, and demand primitive accompaniments. The very same lamps can look tawdry in the French town and natural in the Arab city. They go with tomtoms.

You do not notice the character of the light, except that the glitter of the crystal in the chandeliers is in accord with the richness of the scene. And the scene is almost indescribably rich; for great merchants, like Amour and Selah Bahroun, will hang their outside walls with carpets woven of silk, which billow like the skin of a balloon, as glossy and almost as thin as a billiard-cloth, and dyed in colours as deep and soft as rubies and old ivory. You can pull a yard of each corner through a finger-ring, like the silken tents in the *Arabian Nights*. Curtains of course there are, as rich as the carpets, and stands of ancient swords and pikes and axes. The curio-dealers use all their most magnificent objects on such a night as decorations for their shop-fronts.

Among the most charming features are the long rows of benches, richly caparisoned, which line the

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souks on either side, for the shop-owners and their friends and the musicians whom they have hired.

The perfumers' are the only shops in the bazar which have seats for their customers; they have one each side in front of the counter, designed exactly like the seats in a tramway. A few have a combination of two on each side, still on the tramway principle.

All this is only the outward husk of the festa. The real festa consists in the crowd, and in the little groups assembled in each shop. The crowds have one unchanging characteristic: they contain no women to speak of, except foreigners—even the Jewesses keep away from them; though you see a few of the lower class, dumpty little figures in white with black crape wound round their faces, dragging a child by each hand to see the fairing. The absence of ladies is not felt so much as it would be, because the Arab men dress so much better than the women.

The women are humpty-dumpty and shamble along. The men walk gracefully and hold themselves charmingly; indeed, until you see the bearded or mustachioed faces, a crowd of well-off Arab men at Tunis has almost the effect of a crowd of women in the West. Their burnouses have the effect of women's elegantly-hung opera-wraps in all the lightest and most elegant shades, pinks and salmons and yellows and mauves and sky-blues predominating.

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Photo by the author.

RICH ARAB BOYS ON THE BIRTHDAY OF THE PROPHET.

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They have slender, graceful legs, and often wear ladies' slippers of delicate-coloured kid.

The boys are a great feature on this night, and for about a week each side of it. The Arabs love to make their children as beautiful as possible. It is wonderful what they will spend on their clothes. Silks are nothing: Koran or no Koran, everybody is dressed in silk. Resplendence takes the form of heavy gold lace. The whole Arab city seems full of little boys in gold-laced zouaves and even gold-laced breeches. Gold-laced caps with bullion tassels are almost *de rigueur* with these golden youths.

The perfumer from whom one of the ladies in our party had been buying perfumed cigarettes and jasmine-scent almost daily, was so insistent, as we passed, that we should sit on the bench that he had prepared in front of his shop, that we rested there a few minutes. Haroun-al-Raschid might have seen the crowd on the slopes of the Souk-el-Attarin, the Bazar of the Perfumers. Mingled with the white and golds and pinks and pale blues and lavenders and lemons and roses and apple-greens of the Arab beaux were the *djebbas* of green and crimson brocade, the national dress of Tunis, and the braided, dark-blue cloth of the more staid. Transparent white silks sufficed the infrequent women.

If the soldiers and police rather broke the spell, the poor were delightful. The Berbers, with their

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sun-blackened, uncouth faces and rough brown camel's-hair clothing—the sackcloth which went with ashes in the Bible—pitched and rolled like sailing-boats as they tramped through the souks. They too, like ourselves, were seeing "Arabian Nights." They have seen much, the Berbers. They were wandering round the Lake of Tunis, as they wander to-day, before Dido or any other Phœnician came from Tyre, and have watched with stolid eyes the rise and fall of dominions, Carthaginian and Roman, Vandal and Saracen. They are, as I have said, a plain, weather-beaten people of immense endurance, who, if their sort of Christianity had been accepted by the African Church, might have repulsed both the Vandal and the Saracen, for they were the backbone of Roman Africa in Christian times. But the Romans looked upon them as Gibeonites, and when the day of reckoning came they were not in the fighting line. They have been more or less Gibeonites ever since. They are Gibeonites to-day, who, in place of hewing wood and drawing water, do the hard labour of the Regency.

The French police do not enter the native city. The Bey's police look quite European enough, in the conventional indigo of their profession, to make as big a contrast in that brilliant butterfly crowd as the different kinds of soldiers do—those brown, muscular fellows, inclining to sky-blue and scarlet Eton jackets

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and balloon trousers. The French soldiers go about so much in pairs in the native city that there may be some regulation on the subject, as there is for the *carabinieri* in Italy.

We were told that we should have music if we waited a little, and we did wait more than a little, but without having music. So we wriggled away from the insistent hospitalities of the perfume-seller, and betook us, like the Caliph, to a tour of the bazar.

Any shop that was as large as a bathing-machine had something of interest for us. In one was a knot of Arabs squatting round one of the tall coppers in which they make the tea they like so much. They sat on the floor, surrounded by the low, gaudily painted tables which are rightly sold as Arabic by Liberty, but hardly find acceptance even in the suburbs, they are such shoddy-looking things. The Tunisian Arab strews his rooms with them. To-night they were covered with cups to show that hospitality was rampant. Equally far from the *Arabian Nights* should have been festoons of coloured paper and Japanese lanterns, green, yellow, and red, though these last looked so well.

Most of the parties which were not having tea were sharing a narghile pipe, passing the nozzled tubes from mouth to mouth. Neither tea-parties nor smoking parties were intrinsically interesting. It was

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just that we found something so unusual in these wax-faced starers, dressed in all the gaiety of the Orient, squatting like tailors in their queer little old shops, looking as if they had been in a trance for two thousand years and were just beginning to open their eyes.

And this is what they have done. These particular human beings before us must have left their mothers' bodies a great deal less than a hundred years ago, but the same set of minds which animate them seem to have been used by their fathers and forefathers in the old time before them, back to the days when their race dawned upon history.

The value of the Arab to the student of history lies in the fact that, unless he is Europeanised, he dresses and looks and acts as people did in the days when the world was in the seething pot before the coming of the Lord. I could not help thinking, as I was going along, that in that marvellous throng, compact of thousands of Orientals, there must be here and there one or more of this noble race who looked and dressed as Hannibal looked and dressed in his high-hearted youth at Carthage, before those thirty-six years of manhood spent in fighting on foreign soil. It is easier to picture Alcibiades here, where men still robe, than in his native Athens, where the Alcmæonides of to-day wear tweed suits and try and look English.

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"It is curious," said our wittiest authoress, "what a damning effect Christianity has on dress. Nothing could be farther from our conception of the Apostles than trousers, especially when the tweed is made in Germany." And the odd thing is that a man's Christianity is never above suspicion while he wears Eastern costume. How far are we removed from the Apostles!

More than ever, during this visit to Tunis, was I struck by the fact that to understand the classics of Greece and Rome, the life led by the Greeks in the glorious days of Pericles or Dionysius, and the life led by the Romans in the city's greatest period, you must go to the Orient of to-day. You have to get rid of the idea of suits of clothes and churches, and get into an atmosphere of robes and temples.

Man and his civilisations and his religions were born in the Orient. History has been made by the shrinking back of the Orient from the shores of the Mediterranean, as the virgin forest shrinks from the axe of the settler.

Those who were born with the yearning for the Golden Age; and the far-back times which followed it with its sunset still irradiating them; and the solemn twilight of the Middle Ages,—will always hear the East a-calling, when they have once wandered among the sons of the morning. The Arabs in the Near East, like the Japanese in the Far East, have still the simplicity of the dawn.

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I have wandered far from the souks of Tunis or the Night of the Prophet. I began with the blasphemy of a very modern woman, and travelled backwards to the Golden Age.

Here in Tunis, on this summer night, it was as natural for one's thoughts to fly up the long centuries as for the sparks to fly upwards; for here, a day's sail from France and a short night's sail from Sicily, I had entered the Gates of the Orient, and was rubbing elbows with immortals, unchanged from the time of their forefather Abraham. Baghdad was only yesterday to them. Haroun-al-Raschid would have passed them with the rest as his subjects, sighing only perhaps because the old spirit of adventure had fallen asleep.

More than once the throng grew very thick, and Arab courtesy ran so short that one had to force one's way through it. The reason never varied; in some shop, longer than usual, looking like a passage with the end sealed, a reading of the Koran was in progress, with little seeming reverence, with little seeming interest, read often by a mere boy; but we dogs had no right to see it.

It was not, I thought, a matter of sacredness, but of hostility to Christians, for M. Bachir, our dragoman, who wished us to see the reading, was a pious Mahometan; and an Arab bazar-runner, whom we engaged when we had not our dragoman with us, was furious at the attempt to hustle us away. We

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Photo by Garrigues, Tunis.

AN ARAB GROCER.

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were not annoyed, for we were only bored ; even the bench outside the perfumer's shop was less tiresome than that, especially as we heard sounds which indicated that the music had begun.

"There is one thing, at any rate," I said to Miss Lorimer, "which Christians do better than the rest, and that is music. I know of no pagan music that I care for as music."

"The Jews aren't Christians," she said.

The Jews are jackals, who must be counted with the lions they follow. I don't know if Mendelssohn went to the synagogue or not, but he must be counted as a German. Oriental music is tomtom from Tunis to Tokyo. There is nothing to be said in its favour, except that its instruments make good curios from the decorative point of view, and its musicians make good kodaks. As dispensers of harmony or melody they are failures, and they don't know when to stop.

On that evening I was disposed to overlook their short-comings. I was vexed, however, that you cannot take kodaks by the light of Japanese lanterns, for these wonderfully-dressed people, while they slapped their drums and blew their snake-charmers' pipes, sat coiled on a high bench, and looked down on the passing world from half-closed eyes.

The drum was wonderful. I bought one for five-pence, and now that I have got it safe home to London

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I would not sell it for five pounds. It is a green earthenware jar, shaped something like a water-bottle without a bottom, and a foot and a half high. Where the bottom ought to be, a piece of sheep's-skin is laced tightly across with numerous knots and tassels. The vase, which has a neck wide enough to put the arm down, is *ajouré*, as the French of Tunis are so fond of saying, meaning that it is full of holes that let in the daylight. The performer holds it by the lip with the left hand, and thrums it with her fingers and thumps it with the side of her hand. It was all tom-tomming, not drumming. Even the Dead March in Saul would lose its dignity with such drums and drummers. A tambourine was thought necessary, too. The only thing that I remarked about its player was that she never used her knuckles. The hand which was playing it looked like the hand which plays bridge on the billiard-table.

The flute was the ordinary snake-charmer's flute, a sort of straightened out ear-trumpet which makes a maddening noise, like a badly oiled mowing machine. The other instrument was a one-stringed fiddle without a handle, with one half of the sounding-board made of wood with holes in it, and the other of sheep's-skin. The old Berber down by the Bab-el-Fella made far more effective flutes out of bamboos about three feet long, which he decorated with fine red lines and sold for something under a franc. I suppose

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this was the best band for playing native music in Tunis, and the Arabs evidently admired the performance very much; but we were like the Japanese who went to the Italian Opera, who could see nothing in it but its grotesqueness and its absurdity.

The musical lady in our party certainly did find qualities of something with a grand name in their music, and rebuked us as Philistines. I did not know enough of the subject to argue with her, but I remained convinced that all the musicians of the Orient from the times of Tubal Cain were inferior to the Chevalier at the foot of our musical Parnassus. Still, I own that I liked to have the squeaking and intoning and tomtomming going on while we sat on the perfume-seller's bench and saw the life of the Orient.

Soon we came upon a very intimate touch of it, for a marabout who was a friend of Bachir's came up and sat down beside us. He was a really holy-looking man—a man with one of those good faces which, coming out of the poke bonnet or below the bandsman's hat of the Salvation Army, have gone far to extort the undoubted respect that the great body of Englishmen feels for the followers of Brass-Band Booth. His face was ravaged by small-pox, emaciated by fasting, and it was rather stupid; but it exhaled goodness.

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The holy man, who had been three times to Mecca and took no thought of the morrow as regards his privy purse, was dressed in gorgeous robes of sky-blue satin—presumably to do honour to the Prophet, who forbade the use of silk; and made us feel very uncomfortable by wishing to treat our whole party to coffee. I was not aware then that a native gets it for about a halfpenny a cup, but hoped that a café-keeper would dislike presenting a bill to a saint.

The attendant of the café brought the coffee for the whole party in one hand, though each had his separate tin saucepan with a handle as long as a churchwarden's pipe. With practised ease that attendant carried those dozen saucepans of boiling coffee, clutched in the palm of one hand, through a crowd beside which the Twopenny Tube at its busiest time would look deserted. Cups appeared so suddenly that Aladdin might have brought them on his carpet. The attendant apportioned them.

The holy man was by this time getting through the first chapter of the Koran on his beads. Conversation with him, even through the prince of Tunisian dragomen, was difficult; but he took out his beads, which were of amber the size of pigeon's eggs, for us to derive virtue from them.

Eventually we became oppressed with his sanctity. I forget how we made our escape, or what happened,

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till we found ourselves in the café which has usurped the tomb of another holy man, the most famous Arab café in the bazar. I have described it before, I should hardly have known it for the same place. By day its walls and benches are full of alert merchants, taking their whiff of *kif* while they have their game of cards and their little cups of Turkish coffee. But that night it was like nothing that I have ever seen except a Chinese opium den. Every one in it seemed to have been there for hours, yielding to drugs that act like the spell of Circe's cup. On every bench were rigid forms and glazed eyes. It ought to have been called the Café Nirvana.

I think that most of us felt that it was a time to get out of the souks. We made our exit at the top instead of at our end, so as to see the Dar-el-Bey, the palace of the *fainéant* prince of Tunis, and the square of the Kasbah.

The Bey's palace had his name written outside it in gas or electric light, just as a club or a successful hatter writes Edward in twinkling flames over the front door if it can be seen from Piccadilly.

In the square people still hoped that the Bey would appear, though he is as deaf to the voice of the charmer in this respect as Queen Victoria was. The square was full of the carriages of harem women, though how they hoped to see anything with their

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sealed shutters remains a mystery. The band of one of the Bey's regiments was discoursing European music from the "Mikado." The tall, tropical evergreens of the garden in which they were playing were hung with lanterns from the land of the Mikado, lanterns of pure scarlet and pure yellow, which looked far more effective than any lanterns of the lantern-slide order.

Here too there was the Night of the Prophet. At that moment a tramway came up, of torpedo-like quickness, and we boarded it, and flew past Arab cafés with marvellous lanterns and brass-ware and customers sitting like idols in their best clothes, down to the Porte de France. The Porte de France is the gate between Europe and Africa, between Christianity and Mahometanism. Below it the boulevards of the modern French town run almost to the sea. They too were illuminated for the Birthday of the Prophet —with Japanese lanterns.

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CHAPTER X

ARAB STREETS OUTSIDE THE BAZARS

THERE are several Arab quarters outside the bazar which are almost, if not quite, as good for seeing native life as the bazars themselves, though their architectural backgrounds are not so unique. Round the Bab-Menara, beyond the Bab-el-Djazira, on this side of the Bab-Souika, and from there to the Place Halfaouine, you find, I think, more of all sorts of life than in the bazar; and there is, besides them, the quarter of the rich, lying between the Bab-el-Djazira and the bazar. Here are to be found the finest ancient Arab palaces, like that occupied by the French general, built most of them by Mamelukes who had risen to high office under former Beys. These will be described later.

Right outside the Bab-Menara is a little square, where the humblest of the second-hand dealers spread what we should call rag-and-bone stalls. They do not sell either rags or bones, but half their wares are only fit for the dust-heap, and would only be sold in countries like Sicily or Tunis or Japan, where

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the people are too poor to waste a tomato-tin. I have seen stalls spread on the ground at the Ginza of Tokyo on the last day of the old year, so like these Bab-Menara displays that a photograph of one would do for a photograph of the other, if the proprietors were left out of the picture. Nothing comes amiss, an old beer-bottle, a broken tin candlestick, are welcome; so I think would be an empty Bryant and May match-box holder, if it got past the French customs. Brass and rusty iron are the standbys, especially the component parts of cheap kerosene lamps.

Kerosene is the "Open, Sesame!" of the modern Arab. I am told that within the last year two American commercial travellers, in check suits and panama hats, got right through to Mecca without the slightest opposition, because they were selling kerosene and cheap lamps; they were welcomed as a light to them that sit in darkness by the inhabitants of the fanatical city. It was at the Bab-Menara that Norma Lorimer bought for three sous one of the old Tunis spice-boxes, with its rich painting and gilding only pleasantly faded, and its aroma as spicy as a kous-kouss; and here I bought wonderful scissors as sharp as tailors' shears, and almost identical in shape with the native scissors of Japan and Sicily. Arab ideas must have reached Japan through the Mahometans of China, who at the present moment, according to the latest authority,

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Photo by Garrigues, Tunis.

AN ARAB CAFÉ.

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are as numerous as the Buddhists in the Flowery Land.

It is only occasionally that one can pick up an interesting bit like that spice-box, or old Spanish spurs or weapons, in the Bab-Menara rag fair; the sales in the Souk of the Coppersmiths are much better places for treasure-trove.

But between the Bab-Menara and the Avenue El-Djazira is a splendid bit of Arab Tunis, though it lies outside the grey old ramparts of the Beys which still frown here. Scattered along, you find here a tinsmith making the simple stage properties for Karagous; there a humble café with Arab soldiers in uniforms of comic-opera brilliance guzzling tea in front of it—tea made in the quaint Constantinople teapots; there one of the rich Arabs' cafés. Some of these last have fittings that would excite the envy of Mr. Liberty—teak screens richly carved and gilt, with shelves on them supporting rows of handsome narghileh pipes, great brazen urns, and quaint lamps. On a fête night, when one of these cafés has these lamps alight and is lined with richly-dressed and dignified-looking Arabs, each sitting back with his knees crossed as if he was going to have his photograph taken, it is like a bit of the *Arabian Nights*.

No one can hurtle down this main street in a tramway without noticing how full of picturesque Arab life it is, especially when it approaches the

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El-Djazira Mosque, where you even find snake-charmers on occasion, in the little piazza, and often see camels.

But the Rue Bab-el-Fella, which leads out to the cemetery of the Algerians and the horse, sheep, and camel markets, is better for camels; it abounds in old fondouks where they put up,—inns where the accommodation for beast is out of all proportion to the accommodation for man; where the camels enjoy the courtyard itself, separated by low arches resting on antique columns from a sort of surrounding cloister, which gives shelter from the rain or the scorching sun.

Except the entrance passage, with its watchmen's benches on either side, there is hardly any accommodation for the camel-drivers, though there is so much accommodation for making the camels content. The camels have a habit of huddling together into the middle of the yard, with their humps tied up in matting, some standing, some kneeling, all with their noses in the air, contemptuous of the universe—the contempt of a camel rivals the indifference of a donkey. You don't often see camels moving except in the very early morning.

The Rue Bab-el-Fella is a dull street, although it has a shop or two where they sell splendid glazed yellow pottery at popular prices, and, just inside its gate, an old man who carves out of canes the long Tunisian flutes, with a decoration of red

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scratches, which were copied by some far progenitor of the Tunisian of to-day from a vase of the great age of Greece, just as the decoration on most of the ordinary pottery of modern Tunis is taken from the Greek pottery of the age of Mycenæ.

The streets which lead up to the hay-market and Manouba and the Château d'Eau have all of them fondouks used by the country Arabs bringing in their produce, and little food-shops, and they yield very unspoiled glimpses of native life, such as you get in the out-of-the-way streets in Tokyo.

A street that strangers visit little is the Street of the Dyers, which leaves the tramway opposite the Bab-el-Djazira Mosque. There are two special features in this street—the jewellers' shops and the dyers' yards. The jewellers' shops are only interesting to foreigners as showing middle-class Arab taste, which runs in the direction of Waterbury watches and florid watch-chains—the worst of which are the nickel monstrosities made in Nice, short flat chains attached to dogs and horses and coats-of-arms, and the best are the white metal chatelaines with enamelled bosses described elsewhere.

It is pleasant to turn from these to the yards of the dyers, long and narrow, bordered with huge sunken amphoræ for dye-vats. I tried to find out if the old dyes for which Carthage was famous have survived in Tunis, for the classics are full

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of allusions to the value of robes dyed at Sidon or Carthage. But most of the dyeing of Tunis to-day is done with the best English dyes imported from Manchester, and the fabrics which they dye are also made in Manchester, exclusively for Tunis.

You are constantly coming across evidences of the way in which Tunis deals with Manchester. The grand yellow and red handkerchiefs, with camels on them and other appropriate Eastern devices, which are used so much in Tunis, come also from Manchester, though they are only sold in Tunis. It is surprising how free Arabs are with the name of Manchester.

In the Avenue Bab-el-Djazira there are some splendid Arab rope-shops, which with their bright yellow cord and matting make a fine note of colour. Arabs are always using ropes.

The *rebat* or suburb of Bab-el-Djazira is excellent for the harvest of a quiet eye in studying the native life, which has an indescribable fascination for me. When I was in Tunis, just as when I was in Japan, I could have spent all day in any one of the truly native streets, watching the inhabitants, as Mr. Barrie watches the unlovely and intrinsically uninteresting humble people of whom he writes. But for bold effects the Bab-Souika quarter is undoubtedly better.

The Bab-Souika is the suburb outside the inner wall on the opposite side of the town, and plays a great part in the every-day life of Tunis, because it

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Photo by Garrigues, Tunis.

THE PLACE BAB-SOUIKA.

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is such an important tramway centre. It is easy to judge of its importance, because, in the midst of low, purely Arab shops, it has an atrocious-looking saloon, obtrusively labelled "Tramway Bar," where poison and fire-water are probably synonymous terms.

For varied Arab life the Bab-Souika square has no equal. It is true that the tramways are always banging a European note through it, but nothing startles an Arab from his self-sufficient composure.

Conceive a triangular piazza with the two longer sides of the isosceles filled with one-storey Arab shops, occupied by iron-workers or pottery-sellers. The more frequented side, in a line with the Sidi Mah'rez Mosque, is not content with its shops. Its side-walk (and Arab Tunis is far more particular about having side-walks than Rome is) is given up to a variety of jumble stalls and street auctions, till you get to the Sidi Mah'rez end, where the bakers stand with their ring-shaped bread dropped over sticks like ship-quoits.

Most of the iron-workers are on this side, and their shops are about equally divided between agricultural implements, unchanged in character since the days of the wise Solomon, and rough pairs of handcuffs and fetters. I have never been able to imagine how the Arabs can find a use for all the manacles, new and second-hand, which you see in their shops and stalls, unless they put them on their wives

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to keep them from fighting; for slavery is no longer recognised. Perhaps they laid in their stock before the days of French rule, and find no sale for them under the present Utopian conditions.

Seriously speaking, the iron-workers' shops are not very interesting. We always expected to find the key of Bluebeard's chamber, or at any rate one of the keys of the castles in Spain owned by the Moors in the bazar, by jostling about in these Bab-Souika shops; but we never found any key, old or mysterious or beautiful—you never find the key to anything in Tunis. The most imposing objects in these shops are the great square padlocks, which come half-way between the ordinary padlock and the ordinary lock, and are the ancestors of the foot-long padlocks of Sicily. But their weight was on our conscience. I think that the only article I ever bought from a Bab-Souika ironmonger was a looking-glass shaped like a gore of orange peel, framed in the old Tunis gilt and crimson woodwork, which I procured for a few pence as I was following out my traditional policy of buying curios in the wrong shop.

The *potterers* of the Bab-Souika, if I may so call them, were a much more interesting lot, though they deserved the pun I made at their expense, for they were most dilettante. If we were out early we often used to find their shutters still up (the Arab tradesman scorns to live over his shop—perhaps it would

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make his home too public); and when we did find the shop which we wanted open, its proprietor seldom behaved as if Allah had sent us. The reason why the Jew is driving the Arab out of business in Tunis is that the Arab believes that Allah will send him customers, and the Jew, like the pick-pocket, believes that heaven only helps those who help themselves.

This was a matter of great regret to us, because the *potterers* of the Bab-Souika sell vessels so strange and beautiful that you feel that the century-famous potteries of Tunis still deserve their fame.

The leading line, as a cash draper would say, is a pale, sun-baked pottery, which sometimes has reddish stains on it, decorated with black. Some of them in shape, and nearly all in design, of geometrical or conventionalised figures, are almost the fascimiles of the pre-historic Greek pottery of the Mycenæan Age. The other principal line consists of a sort of majolica, mostly green and yellow, worked into pitchers of noble size and simplicity, or water-bottles as fantastic as Chinese dragons.

The Tunisian has an idea that his water will not keep cool unless he has a current of air passing through the centre of his water-bottle, or, at any rate, an outer shell to it pierced with innumerable air-holes. For threepence you can buy a vessel of glazed green earthenware, as ambitious in its piercings and its finials as a choice piece of Limoges.

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Oddities abound in these shops. A favourite object, worth from a penny to threepence according to size and elaboration, is a kneeling camel of pale earthenware. Its head will sometimes be spirited enough for a sketch of Phil May's. But the oddest thing of all is that earthenware drum so much used by Arab orchestras, made of pierced majolica (everything is *ajouré* in Tunis), which is a water-jar with its bottom replaced by tightly laced parchment. In the centre of the triangle between the two lines of tramways you sometimes see snake-charmers; you can always find a fortune-teller doing his divining with dust on the side-walk opposite. Sometimes he has a pile of cabalistic-looking books beside him, but it does not follow that he can read them.

The Place Bab-Souika is always full of life, because here the tramways start for the Bardo, where the Bey lives; and I think the three-decker Bizerta bus, the loftiest and crankiest of horse-drawn vehicles, passes this way. Moreover, it lies directly between two spots especially frequented by the Arabs, the Sidi Mah'rez Mosque and the Place Halfaouine.

The street leading from the Bab-Souika to the mosque is one in which rather better-off Arabs do their shopping. It has a prosperous grocer or two. In Tunis the grocer still keeps everything in drawers, so that the whole shop from floor to ceiling consists of drawers of some dark wood. His shop always

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looks as if it ought to be a chemist's, but it is not half a century yet since the London grocer helped you to tea and sugar and spice from drawers ; and of course, to a nation of kous-kouss eaters spices loom large.

There are more *potterers* here, who add cheap glass and china and lamps to their stocks ; and here are the flashy shoemakers who do all the business with the native women in Tunis, who delight in the cheapest patent leather and in pale coloured kid and cotton satin covered with glaring beads. For the women, also, are the grand candle-shops in this street—candles are a brand of perfumery in Tunis, and inseparable in the Arab mind from weddings and funerals. Heaven knows that they are badly enough in need of more light on the subject.

This is an important shopping street, because Sidi Mah'rez is such a very important person in Tunis. The Arabs reverence him as a saint, and the Jews as the protector who gave them most of their privileges. His mosque is distinctly the handsomest in the city, the only one which has an imposing cluster of domes like a decent Constantinople mosque.

The Halfaouine quarter opens off the opposite side of the Place Bab-Souika, through a curious narrow souk occupied by provision-dealers and florists. The humble Arab restaurants look appetising enough. They mostly have nice old-fashioned shops and nice

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old-fashioned vessels. The shop consists mainly of a long bench on which the patrons squat, though they might just as well squat on the floor, and the shop would hold twice as many if there was no bench at all. The cooking stove and the counter are between the restaurant and the street, for the convenience of out-patron. Kous-kouss of a sort is always the main feature, though they have artichokes, generally wild, and various kinds of cakes and fries, like you see in a Sicilian cook-shop, which are evidently purely Arabic in origin.

But the shops for uncooked comestibles are not so pleasing. I did not see any fishmongers; the butchers' shops were rather Chinesey, with the meat literally off-colour—turning brown at the edges; and the greengrocers were poor and dear, dealing mostly in emaciated oranges. The flower-sellers were likewise dear, or unwilling to sell to foreigners. I am sure Arabs do not give a franc for a scented paper flower or a spike of jessamine blossoms wired together, and they had little else in their shops. The souk is very crowded, and has a general air of not wanting foreigners.

At its lower end it widens and devotes itself to barbers' shops and cafés, especially where it opens on to the Place Halfaouine, under the shadow of the loftily built, unbeautiful Halfaouine Mosque. There is no place in all Tunis which the Arab likes so

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Photo by Mr. Pearson.

THE CAFÉ UNDER THE HALFAOUINE MOSQUE.

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much as the Place Halfaouine; it is there that he hurries when the joyful moment arrives that he can no longer distinguish the white thread, in Ramadan, and the square is half surrounded with the booths where Karagous and other Ramadan entertainments are held.

The best thing you can do on a Friday afternoon, about five, is to go and take a seat in a café just at the corner opposite the mosque, which commands a view of both the lane and the square. You will soon be surrounded by well-off Arabs in their Friday best (Friday is their Sunday). They all, of course, sit gravely, with their legs crossed at the knee and the coffee-table at their elbow, and not in front of them. They like to sit chin in hand, elbow on table.

They order something for the good of the café (everything is cheap), and buy one of the artificial flowers made of jessamine blossoms wired together, and sit as dreamy as opium-eaters till they hear the muezzin proclaiming the official sunset. Then the good Mahometans hurry off to the mosque, a process which empties half the chairs.

It is very pretty to see a long line of Arab cafés filled with patrons in the light, bright colours of their best clothes. Every seat on the bench against the wall of a café will be full; these are the seats they prefer. The cafés round the Place Halfaouine are not very remarkable, but some of the older cafés

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have magnificent carved and gilded teak screens with elegant Moorish arches for the fronts of their premises; and splendid old brass-ware and pipes; and perhaps a tree, God's best gift in Tunis. The café at the Kasbah has a tree.

In the streets of Tunis you do not come upon superb public buildings like you do at Constantinople. Nobody ever seems to have thought of putting up ambitious buildings at Tunis, till the French came and put up the Cathedral and the theatre in a flamboyant Moresque style, inspired by the brilliant skies.

In Constantinople the mosques are as grand as Greek temples, and as you go along a street you come upon a fountain as fine as a Japanese temple. But at Tunis everything is humble except the tombs of the saints—which are called "marabouts," like their owners, and are as rigidly closed to unbelievers as the mosques themselves. They are sometimes quite picturesque, with their green fish-scale domes and richly ornamented doorways—the doorways occasionally being sea-blue and the doors they contain sea-green.

These marabouts of Tunis form a welcome feature in the low, yellow, dusty streets, for you may find the green door under a great arch open, and catch a glimpse of a dear little black and white courtyard; they may even have a tree or two.

There are very few fountains in Tunis with

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architectural pretensions—not more than one, I think, like the temple-shaped Turkish fountains. I can only remember one or two with arcades of any elegance in a land where classical columns and Moorish arches are as usual as park railings in London. And this is odd, for in the bazar, which is full of arches and old columns, there are a great many fountains—the gift of water being the common charitable bequest with the pious. What the Tunis streets depend on most for variety is the five hundred little mosques which are scattered about the city, some of them the quaintest little creations imaginable, with hardly anything to show that they are mosques, except, perhaps, a pair of old arched windows and the rudiments of a tower; but usually with just sufficient architecture to elevate the eye.

The general effect of a street of Arab shops in Tunis is remarkably like the general effect of a street of shops in Japan, in the winter, before they put their sun-curtains down. I have photographs of the pottery shops in the Bab-Souika and some pottery shops near the Temple of Inari in Kyoto, which are as like as most twins. Both of them have about the same cubic capacity as a bathing machine, and are only just high enough to take in a tall man; both have the entire front taken off during the daytime. Neither of them uses a chair, but the Tunisian shop may have a counter.

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It is not my purpose in this chapter to describe the Arab houses in these quarters ; it would be more convenient to treat of them when I am describing the houses of the rich Arabs. And I must reserve that for the chapter on "What there is to kodak in Tunis."

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CHAPTER XI

HOW THE ARABS LIVE

I MUST be allowed to repeat myself here for a page or two, so as to complete the picture of the rich Arab quarter of Tunis.

If you wish to understand Granada, go to Tunis. It is an historical fact that many of the Moors of Granada went to Tunis when they were driven out of Spain. At Tunis you have the romance of two lost causes, the romance of Carthage and the romance of the Alhambra. In the bazar there are Moorish merchants of old families who preserve the keys, as well as the title-deeds, of the Spanish mansions of their ancestors. The very streets preserve the tradition. The most beautiful Arab street in Tunis is the Rue des Andalous—the street of the men of Andalusia—named from the Vandals who conquered Spain as well as Carthaginian Africa, and got the ships for invading Carthage from Carthagena. The memories of Spain penetrate even to the throne of the Bey. In the Dar-el-Bey, his palace in the Kasbah

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of Tunis, are chambers whose fretted vaults rival the Alhambra's in their exquisite beauty.

The rich Arabs have their town houses near the Djazira and Menara Gates. Those inside the ancient walls of Tunis are old—many of them were built by the Mamelukes; the others are modern, and said to be luxurious and convenient. It is not easy to find lovelier old-world bits than streets like the Rue des Andalous and the Rue du Riche. Here, as I wrote in my introduction, you can see in your mind's eye the storming of Carthage, and of Carthaginian Motya in Sicily—the battles that lasted for days between the invading armies in the streets and the desperate inhabitants on the lofty housetops, which almost met above.

In the fiercest African sunshine you can find shade between these tall houses, which have blind walls in their lower stories, broken only by the noble Saracenic gateways of the Middle Ages, though in their higher stories there are green grills of richly carved woodwork inside cages of crossed iron bars, from which your movements will be watched as eagerly as if you were an actor on the stage. Half the street is vaulted over, and as you thread the vaults you observe one of the most curious notes in Tunisian architecture—that the arches of these vaults, except the outside arch at each end, are almost invariably supported by columns on one side only. The columns are a harvest to the

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Photo by Garrigues, Tunis.

DOOR OF ARAB HOUSE STUDDED WITH NAILS BY ORDER OF THE EMPEROR CHARLES V.

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architect's eye, because Tunis was built from the ruins of ancient Carthage, and I suppose ancient Tunis, which was yet older. Nearly all the columns go back to ancient Roman or even Punic times. This does not prevent their present owners from painting them red and green pretty frequently.

The mediæval doorways are also well worthy of study. They have the exquisite horse-shoe Moslem arch, surrounded with delicate tracery and carved inscriptions, often picked out with colour. The stout wooden doors, painted the green of sea-water, are studded with nails in ornamental patterns. Those nails had a moral as well as a physical resisting power, for, as I have said, the great Emperor Charles V. respected the sanctity of Arab domestic life, and to prevent his soldiers pleading mistake as an excuse, he decreed that no soldier should enter any door studded with these nails. The woodwork and iron-work of the harem windows, high above the street, is often beautiful, and painted the same sea-green.

It is not easy to become acquainted with the arrangements of a wealthy Arab household. You may pass up a whole street, looking from end to end like a bit of the Alhambra, and not find one door unbolted. You may not enter house or mosque or school. In return for the peaceable way in which the Arabs acquiesced in their acquisition of Tunis, the French have respected Arab domestic and religious

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exclusiveness. But you can do it in a roundabout fashion. You can see the public rooms in the Bey's palaces, and a few others; you can see the excellent museum of Arab life at the Bardo Palace; and out at Sidi-bou-Said on the site of ancient Carthage, there is a fine Arab house unoccupied. Even better than the palace of the Bey is the beautiful house now occupied by the French General, near the Bab-Menara.

There are certain features common to all great Arab houses. Where the porter has his lodge in an Italian palace or an Oxford college there is a reception room, in which strangers can transact their business with the master of the house, without being admitted into the house itself. Every house has one or more courtyards for taking the air without being visible to the outside world. One court has its wall-fountain—a sort of glorified tap—and much of the domestic work, such as washing, is transacted in it, as it is in Sicilian courtyards.

Most noticeable of all is the prevalence of the T-shaped chamber. The shape is more apparent than real, for the arms of the T are formed by cutting off ante-rooms from a great rectangular chamber. The front half of the room is left open from end to end; the back half is divided into three—the centre portion is left open, and the two sides form retiring rooms for wives or servants. Sometimes there is a bed only in the shaft of the T, sometimes

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there is one at each end. The beds are wonderful affairs—huge four-posters decorated with elaborate gilt screen-work, any of them fit for Napoleon.

The rest of the room looks below like a department of Liberty's shop, though above, its vaults may be filled with a tracery of gesso carved by the hand before it is dry, like you find in the ceilings of the Alhambra. Tunis is a splendid testimonial to Liberty. The old carpets of Kairouan find their way alike into his shop and Arab palaces; and on the carpet you see all the familiar bric-à-brac—tables that consist of brass tea-trays on folding legs, or of carved wood, almost vulgar with red and blue and gold, a style of decoration repeated *ad nauseam* on shelves and mirror frames. You get the same bric-à-brac of brass and pottery, the same couches, the same stools, the same draped walls. It is only when you look a little higher, or outside in the court-yard, that you get effects hardly possible in the restricted space of a London shop—broad stretches of wall inlaid with noble old Persian or arabesque tiles of intricate patterns of delightful blues. Then you are in the real and eternal East.

Arab houses have flat roofs. The staircases leading up to them may only be used by the women, otherwise the gardens and courts in which the women walk might be commanded by male eyes. In the city, where roofs adjoin, the ladies are said to ex-

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change visits with their neighbours by walking along the roofs. An Arab house which has two courts, the back one being confined to women, must be very like an ancient Greek house in principle, which had all the men's rooms except those of the master of the house opening off the front court, and the women's off the second court, to which no grown-up man but the master of the house had admission.

So much for the grand houses, of which there are several streets near the Souk of the Saddle-makers.

The houses of the poorer Arabs, which lie near the Place Halfaouine or the Djazira Gate, are very small and only of one or two stories, and are built of plaster instead of stone. Their streets are quite picturesque, the intense white of the plaster being broken by the sea-green of the doors, which often have a Reckitt's-blue border round their arches. Each has its harem window of heavy iron cross-bars, lined with pierced woodwork.

These streets are often culs-de-sac, and have long stretches of blind wall. Monotony of outline is obviated by tiny ancient mosques with low minarets, or the numerous tombs of saints with domes of green tiles. Like the mosques and schools and houses, the tombs are closed to unbelievers, though there are one or two exceptions. The poor Arab dwelling-streets are very picturesque, and even more picturesque

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Photo by Garrigues, Tunis.

AN ARAB STREET.

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are the poor streets of the Arab quarter which contain a good sprinkling of shops and fondouks.

No good Christian can look upon a fondouk for the first time without feeling strangely moved, for here he beholds the very lineaments of the stable and the manger in which the Saviour of mankind was born. The beasts employed are chiefly donkeys and camels. Contempt, approaching hostility, is the expression on the camel's face—perhaps because it is all upper lip. Still, I like to see a fondouk full of them, with their humps covered with matting like the Hyde Park palms in winter. It gives such an Oriental effect, and camels are always posing. In these streets in the morning it is quite an ordinary sight to see a train of camels.

The Arab women, like the Japanese, are not expected to go to places of worship much till they are old enough to have lost their attractions. The Arab takes off his shoes at the mosque door, as the Japanese leaves his sandals below the temple steps, because he generally takes them off to go into a house. The reason why any one, if he gets permission, may go into the superb Sadiki College, a lovely Oriental palace where richly dressed young Arabs receive modern education, is because that was founded on the European plan, and is therefore not in theory a house. With its French professors it could not well be. You may also go into

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the Sadiki Hospital, with its clean bright wards opening out of a fig-shaded alley, which is one of the most delightful bits in the whole bazar. It, too, is on the European plan, well-managed.

The Arab's castles in the air are of the past; they are literally castles in Spain. I doubt if there is an Arab in Tunis who has read Washington Irving's *Tales of the Alhambra*, but they all have engraven on their hearts pictures as romantic as he drew of the brilliant Arab days in Spain. The Arab lives in the past; he never thinks of the future; he prizes all that is ancient; he is very dignified, very sensitive to praise or blame; he is generous and hospitable and impulsive, but has no foresight or prudence; he breaks his promises, not because he is dishonourable, but because he promises impossibilities.

He is also slow, but he rises early, and if he is a shoemaker or a saddler, he never quits his work till the day is over. He gets his mid-day meal from a neighbouring cook-shop. More prosperous merchants rise early, attend to their business, go away for lunch and a siesta, visit their friends, and sit about cafés watching dances, or listening to a story-teller, or talking with their cronies until quite late. Up-to-date Arabs spend a great deal of their time in riding about in trams, or sitting in the French cafés smoking.

The Arab smokes *hashish* or *kif* instead of opium, with rather disastrous effects. This contravenes the

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spirit of the Koran, but the letter of the Koran is so strict that he has a regular system of misinterpretation. You often see Arabs drinking beer in the cafés, which goes ill with their biblical appearances and costumes. Lemonade with snow floating on the top is much more suggestive of Mount Lebanon.

The principal food of the Arab is kous-kouss. A good kous-kouss is a most expensive dish. It consists of a coarse-grained flour something like the Italian polenta, piled round lamb or fowl, stewed with all manner of vegetables and certain hot spices. It has a taste completely its own, which I can only compare to peppercorns. The stewing is done by steaming—it might, in fact, be called a steamed stew. I never tasted any savoury so good. Arabs are noted cooks.

The poorer people are, the cheaper the kind of kous-kouss they eat. The very poor only eat bread dipped in oil. There are oil charities to which paupers take their dry bread to be dipped. That is the Arab form of a soup-kitchen. The wine of Tunis is excellent, and marvellously cheap, but the Arabs are not supposed to drink it. I have not been at Tunis in the season of dates; the world takes its dates from Tunisia.

The Arab is deteriorating under the influence of French civilisation. He is acquiring a taste for European furniture and pianos. As I have said, he gets both his cottons and his dyes from Manchester,

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though he still does the dyeing himself in narrow passages, in rows of huge jars which remind you of the story of Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves. He also imports the material for his burnouses, the Arab equivalent of kimonos, from Manchester, and insists upon the fabric being sold exclusively to him. It looks all right, but is very inferior to the fine wool of the original burnous which is more suited to his habits, as he has no fires in winter. He wears European shirts, or workmen's blouses, instead of his own chemises.

The foreign articles of clothing which he adopts are chiefly those which resemble Arab articles. Cheapness is his motive. Good Arab clothes are so dear. But he is beginning to buy the gala-day suits for his little boys ready-made from foreign Jews.

Still, Tunis is in the main the unspoilt East. When you pass through the Bab-Menara, the gate of the woman-saint, you walk in streets of houses that might belong to an ancient Carthaginian or an ancient Greek, and when you look at the clothes of the crowd, plays like *Ulysses*, or the *Sign of the Cross*, do not appear quite so silly as they did.

Once a week you may see the finishing touch in the survivals of the ancient world, when the Bey sits in judgment on his people and orders summary executions carried out in public at the Bardo; or the Cadi, in a chamber screened off from an exquisite

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Photo by Garrigues, Tunis.

THE UNSPOILED EAST—A STREET IN THE BAB-DJEDID QUARTER.

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antique cloister, sits in biblical garments cross-legged upon a deep divan, and settles ecclesiastical cases out of the unchallengeable depths of his wisdom. It is in the country that the atmosphere of the Middle Ages lingers longest. Tunisia, not Tunis, has its sect of self-torturers, an aggravated form of Dervishes, who stab themselves and hang themselves on meat-hooks.

A whole book might be written about Ramadan, the Arab Lent, when all good Mahometans fast from dawn in the morning till dark in the afternoon, and have a carnival evening and night. They are great on illuminations, and what we should call the shows of the fair. Crystal chandeliers are a feature that I am sure we get from the *Arabian Nights*. Ramadan takes you straight back into the *Arabian Nights*. It must be a strain, because the Arabs are so cross at the end of it.

In Ramadan, the Mahometan Lent, the believer must not eat after it is light enough to distinguish a white thread from a black. Last year Ramadan was easy, as it began in November, when the nights are long; but it is very tiring when it falls in the height of summer. As the Mahometan year is lunar, the season varies every year. An hour before the dawn a watchman comes round with a horn and knocks people up, crying, "Wake up and eat!" They eat a meal and go to sleep again.

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On the first day of Ramadan people do everything as usual; but after a time no business is done—every one is too tired. Fasting during the day, and feasting during the night, is not good for training. No wine is drunk during Ramadan; if a man was caught breaking this rule he might be killed, and would at any rate be imprisoned, or receive so many strokes on his feet, the only place where a Mahometan is beaten. Even little boys have all their whippings there. This is a cheerful subject for contemplation when they take their shoes off at the school door.

The Mahometan is more fanatical during Ramadan because of his sufferings. He hates Christians worse than ever. Most of the disputes between Christians and Mahometans occur in Ramadan. The Mahometan is no use even as a guide during Ramadan, though there are exceptions among the regular dragomen. He may not smoke, and it is just as bad for him to breathe the smoke of a Christian as to smoke himself. He does not even take a drink of water during the day. As evening approaches he prepares his cigarette, but at the end of a trying day his accuracy in judging between black and white threads is not trusted; he is obliged to wait for gun-fire. He lights his cigarette before he eats. Children under twelve do not keep Ramadan.

As people try to sleep all day and shorten the

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hours of fasting, they do their best to keep awake all night. Most people eat two or three meals in the night, and the rich people spend the whole night at meals or entertainments, so as to keep awake. This is the season in which the dancers make their harvest. Some of them come to Tunis from as far as Beyrout, in Syria; they are both men and women, Arabs, not Jews, and very celebrated. They do not dance the same dances as the Jews. One of the favourite Arab dances, performed by boys of about eighteen, is to make one part of the body tremble and keep the other parts motionless. It is the best time for story-tellers, too. Some of them come from Arabia, and even Persia. Most of them are Dervishes.

Tunis is not without Dervishes of its own, though they do not wear the tall, conical hats which distinguish them in Constantinople.

There was once a Dervish doctor in Tunis, who favoured remedies like the heads of vipers boiled, and pumice-stone ground. An old man and an old woman just married, and anxious to have a family, went to him. "I've got something for you, very rare and expensive—a little bit of a brick of the Holy Mosque at Mecca. If you powder a very little in your tea or coffee every day, in so many months you will have children." The woman died. This Dervish came from India.

The real Sheikh-ul-Islam lives at Constantinople,

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but they have a special Sheikh-ul-Islam at Tunis who presides at the Cadi's court. Before Mahomet's time there were many fasting days, but he lumped them all together in the month of Ramadan.

The favourite entertainments are the representations of Karagous, a species of performance which comes from Stamboul and signifies a sort of black Punchinello. Karagous is a galanty-show of shadows projected on a transparent screen. The events of the year are reviewed, very simply, but with much indecency. All the cafés have this Karagous, and in spite of its nature every one goes there—even little boys and girls—and laughs.

There is at Tunis, near the Place Halfaouine, a very old marabout who is supposed to be at the same time at Constantinople and Mecca. He is like a king during Ramadan, though he is a filthy old rascal who washes nothing but his hands. The Sultan of Turkey and the Bey of Tunis send him clothes regularly, and he puts them all on and never takes any of them off. He is a most ludicrous sight as he stumbles along, a mountain of clothes with very skinny legs. But all the people try to kiss him, and when the poor people who cannot afford to give him clothes give him pieces of cloth, as what the Japanese call *nasaräeru*, symbols, he sews them on his clothes. When the grandfather of the present Bey was ill he sent him purses of gold, so

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he is very rich and has a little mosque at the Place Halfaouine.

Besides the Karagous the Arabs amuse themselves with chess and cards and other games during Ramadan. Nowadays some degenerate Arabs eat privately during Ramadan. They sleep so very badly during the day if they have meals by night—so the day is interminable. They go about their business, but while they are waiting for three, four, and five in the afternoon, the strain becomes awful. At last they cease to listen to the clocks, and go off into a sort of dull despair till the gun booms. Then it is hey for a cigarette and a glass of water!

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CHAPTER XII

ARAB WOMEN

LAPIE, the French professor who wrote that very clever book, *Civilisations Tunisiennes*, has much to say of the Arab woman. He says that the Arab woman's day is monotonous. She does a little sewing—very little; changes her clothes, sleeps, eats, and talks if she is at all above poverty. Her lot is the exact converse of her Bedouin sister's. For the townswomen all have some man to support them, and the Bedouin women all have to support some man, and are as industrious as they are hardy.

Arab women are not excluded from mosques, but women of high birth neither visit mosques nor tombs. Jewish women often pay honour to Mahometan saints. Near Baufarik there is a sacred wood, which is visited, like the sweet waters of Europe, by Arab women and Jewesses in turn. One day veiled Arab women arrive on the croups of their husbands' saddles; another day unveiled Jewesses arrive on foot. In the depths of this wood in a

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Photo by Garrigues, Tunis.

AN ARAB WEDDING.

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ravine, a little brook flows; and among the foliage votive candles burn. In the brook women paddle up and down, whether Jewish or Arab; and the vendors of candles at the shrine sell to one and the other alike.

Neither Jew nor Mahometan is supposed to see his bride before marriage. The æsthetic admiration beforehand which plays such a large part in English marriages is expressly forbidden to the Arab.

When he has reached a marriageable age his mother visits the houses of her friends, and chooses him a wife according to her tastes, and not his. Or his father may conclude a union favourable to his business interests with the head of another family—the son plays quite a secondary part in the matter; he is often put down for a marriage as soon as he is born, as a rich man's son is put down for a popular house at Eton.

On the first evening of an Arab wedding, the women of the husband's household go to fetch the bride. The bridegroom is supported by his relations and friends. Then the ceremony becomes very like a Japanese wedding, where the bride is accompanied by her maid only, when she receives the bridegroom. In Tunis, when the husband is admitted to see the wife for the first time, she has her nurse with her. He slips a piece of money into the nurse's hand, and she then leaves them. This first *tête-à-tête* does not

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last long; and, like a Japanese wedding, has for its most striking feature the drinking out of the same cup; but the Arabs have some prayers, and the Japanese have not a semblance of religion about their weddings.

The Arab then leaves his wife, as the wedding takes two days; and on the next day, before she sees her husband again, she receives the congratulations of her friends, seated on a cushion. There is a sort of wedding breakfast of sugared and perfumed pastry, and a dancing performance, at which the musicians are always men, always Jews, and always blind. The guests leave, and the husband appears in time for lunch, and married life begins with the first meal at the same table. At Tunis, the Arab woman sometimes eats with her husband when he is alone; but, of course, disappears when he has company.

In theory the position of the Arab woman may be equal to that of the Japanese; in practice it is worse, for the Arab is not polite to his wife. He speaks to her roughly, and she has to reply to him humbly. She calls him "Sidi," which the French translate "Monseigneur," but which we should, with our national brevity, translate "Sir." He has no pleasant word for her when he returns home; she must be absolutely obedient. Like a Japanese wife, she is a servant and not a slave. An Arab can divorce

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his wife as easily as a Japanese—if he wants to; but his desire to do so is considerably curtailed by the fact that the Arab women, unlike their Japanese cousins, have dowries, and take them back if they are divorced, including the present the husband has had to give them proportionate to his means. In Tunis, like Japan, the wife has much more trouble about pleasing her mother-in-law than about pleasing her husband. As might be expected, the principal avocation of women is getting married. Lapie is full of picturesque details upon this subject. The Tunisian husband marries a pig in a poke, though one sacred writer, Sidi Khilil, goes so far as to allow a young man to see the face and the palms of the hands of his intended. In Tunis there are two exceptions—when the wife chosen is one of the husband's slaves, or a cousin. They get on better when the husband and wife are related. As several generations often inhabit the same house, cousins, male and female, are apt to be brought up together until they are grown up. Then a girl is shut up in the harem, and only comes out of it veiled. But as she is married as soon as she is grown up, his cousin's image may be fresh in the youth's mind.

Thus, in spite of the Prophet's warning against these marriages, cousins in Tunis very frequently marry. The popularity of such marriages there

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is attested by such sayings as, "He is mad who marries a stranger while his cousin waits." Sometimes cousins are forced to marry against their will.

Both the Jewess and the Arab woman retain full rights over their personal estates; but the Jewess, while she is married, shares her goods with her husband.

The Arab pays a dowry over to his wife, but does not buy her. The dowry paid by the betrother, if he is poor, is one hundred piastres; if he is a bourgeois he pays her a thousand; and if rich, five thousand. This dowry is hers, not her father's, though the latter, when it is sent, receives it as her intermediary. A girl cannot be forced into marrying a person; she may have seen the husband intended for her through her veil. When the marriage contract is being signed, the father has to ask the formal consent of the girl. If she has no father, the notaries must see her, unveiled, and hear from her own lips that she consents. If a father forces a husband upon his daughter, who is unfit to marry or is unworthy, the Cadi can stop or annul the marriage. The girl need not speak—silence means consent.

The woman has not only the right of saying yes or no to the marriage, she can stipulate in the contract for guarantees of her liberty and dignity. She can ask her husband to promise to spend every night with her (*i.e.*

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not to take a second wife), or make him promise to be faithful, in the contract. If he remarries, or is faithless under these conditions, she can sue for a divorce. She may demand authorisation to quit the conjugal roof at her will. Frequently contracts provide that she shall not follow her husband into all his residences —Tunisian women, who are bored in the provinces, sometimes refuse to follow a husband whose duties take him away from the capital.

Only very great ladies nowadays object to seeing doctors; but otherwise, women see no men but their nearest relations. The presence of a lady visitor forces the husband to disappear—hence female disguise is sometimes used by lovers. A grand lady scarcely ever goes out. Whenever she does, the hermetically sealed carriage is brought by the servants right into the court, where she gets in, and the carriage is harnessed. When she arrives at her friend's house, the carriage is unharnessed and dragged into the vestibule, where the visitor descends.

The middle-class woman goes out oftener. You may meet her with her attendant, and an elaborate silken veil of black, with red and white woven into it, which falls to her knees, and, when lifted up, allows her to see a step at a time. Her *häik* is of fine white silk. The poorer women wear a thick kind of black scarf over the face, kept in place by the *häik*.

The Arabs say, according to Lapie, that the

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reason for this close veiling is custom. It is not religion, for all the Koran says on the subject is, "The least raiment that a woman may wear is a heavy shirt covering the body in such a manner as to cover the neck and hair." The Prophet made his wives veil, but already in his time it was a custom. Lapie says that jealousy is the real reason, though some think it might have once been to protect their complexions from the sun. When a Bedouin wishes to play the gentleman, he forces his wives to veil.

An Arab husband provides the house, the income, and a dowry for his wife. She brings the furniture, and her services as housekeeper and mistress. On a fixed day her trousseau is brought to her husband's house. You may meet a procession of mules, horses, or asses (according to the social status of the bride). Each animal carries a piece of furniture—a cupboard, a bed, or cushions. The pieces sway, the children perched on the top scream. At the crossways the cortège stops, and the men who conduct it join with the children in a marriage chant.

A man's business lies outside, and a woman's inside the household. She cooks and makes clothes, guards the domestic hearth and the younger children. Women are forbidden by custom to have even commercial dealings with strangers. You never see a woman of the middle classes stopping to shop—only servants or women of the people.

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The menial functions of woman are responsible for her social inferiority. The lack of employment in richer houses, where servants and slaves do all the work, and excess of labour in the poorer, make the women stupid. They speak like little children, in a lisping, cajoling, or peevish way. They are nothing but children. Though Arab men do not admire fat, their wives generally become stout through their lack of exercise.

The Tunisian wife in easy circumstances to-day only has one duty—to prepare her husband's kous-kouss. Rich Arabs are becoming more and more monogamous—indeed, polygamy is rare in Tunis ; for the poor man it costs too much, and the Bey himself has set the example against it.

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CHAPTER XIII

THE MARVELS OF TUNIS

I WAS rather disgusted that, whenever you asked what you ought to see in Tunis, people took it for granted that you would want to begin with the Arab *café-chantant* and hip-dancing. I think these performances amongst the dullest and most revolting which the thirst for sight-seeing has ever persuaded me to sit out. There is no fun and no music in them, and I soon tire of the novelty of seeing Oriental musicians striking an earthenware drum with the edges of their hands, and whining with their voices a monotonous chant without words.

Nor is the music improved if the band is increased by twangers on one-string fiddles and screamers upon bamboo flutes, though the latter have the antiquarian interest of appearing on Egyptian monuments. One often sits listening to this sort of thing for an hour before the hip-dancing begins. The Arabs do not mind, because they feast their eyes all the time on the elephantine charms of the Jewish dancers.

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The whole thing was disgusting to me, commencing with the Arabs themselves, who sat about the hall, transgressing the Koran by drinking alcoholic liquors, and leering at the Jewesses.

The Arab, when he sails down from the Kasbah in a fluttering white burnous, is often beautiful and romantic enough to turn the head of almost any woman; but the Arab at a *café-chantant*, lolling back on his chair with glazed eyes and a bock of beer in front of him, is a beast—but not such a beast as the women who dance before him.

The hall is not seated like an English music-hall, but more like a café on the boulevard, the chairs being arranged round little tables, for every one is supposed to order drinks, as well as pay the entrance money. Sometimes a party of friends go together to one of these cafés, but their principal patrons are apt to go alone—in itself a bad feature. The Arab dresses himself to kill on most occasions, though he has nothing to kill, poor devil, except the Jewish women of pleasure. He goes to a *café-chantant* especially gorgeous, and lets the flower-seller—a man, not a beautiful girl—provide him with an armoury of the quaint tufts of tightly wired jessamine flowers in which he delights. He sits with them and his bock on the table in front of him, feasting his eyes on the row of female walruses who are going to dance.

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There was a priest at Taormina who frightened his congregation into a religious revival by telling them that hell would be full of Germans. The sight of these women might cure a subaltern of his taste for music-halls. They are horrible, horrible, horrible! They are human sows, whose faces are daubed with vermilion and whose bodies are decked with tawdry chiffons which would disgrace a Guy Fawkes—as far as they are decked at all, for they show an expanse of bosom and bare arm—and shoddy white silk breeches, stretched over the legs of hippopotami. I can find no comparison in the brute creation for their leer, for in the abuse of love He made man a little lower than the animals. One might call it bestial, for want of a better word; but no beast would look like that, unless he were a baboon, man's fallen brother. An amorous boa-constrictor would look refined and romantic beside these "strange women" of the Bible.

Their eyelashes are blackened and their eyes brightened with kohl till they stare like a house to let. Their fingers are reddened with henna—I think even the gums of their large, open, man-hunting mouths are picked out with something to make the teeth gape at you. You want to get away from them, as you want to get away from a red-eyed bull, seeking what he may destroy. They are like huge, hideous, wicked, terrifying images of Moloch, waiting for men to be roasted alive in the brazen

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arms of their lust. You long to put a stone wall between you and those snakes' heads, with their glaring eyes and ravening jaws, before the entertainment begins.

It takes some time beginning. You sit there for an hour or more in front of these *grosses Juives*, white elephants to anything but an Arab. While the musicians drone their chant and bump their drums, you are supposed to be taking in their points. You see various messages passing up to them from voluptuaries seated by themselves. At length the foreigners show signs of moving, in despair of there being anything like a performance. If the proprietor estimates that the movement is genuine, he tells the first dancer to begin. She advances to the footlights with a grin of triumph. She has no doubt that she is perfectly lovely and love-compelling, though she looks like a balloon with legs, as she towers above the footlights.

Doubtless the hip-dancing, which means the swaying of a mountainously fat body, might suggest all manner of passionate declarations if you were able to give it a fair examination; but the rolling about of this uncontrolled mass of obesity is too ungraceful. The whole figure of the woman is so revolting to European ideas of feminine charm, that you soon transfer your attention from the dancer to the audience. Even the interest of the audience is disgusting.

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It seems like a recollection of a nightmare to recall even the slightest and the least ill-looking of the dancers, as she stood on the stage above us in her ridiculous little muslin dressing-jacket and enormous tight-fitting breeches of white satin, revealing a monstrous area of bosom and arms covered with sham jewellery, and with what coarse beauty there was in her face inflamed with splashes of red and black and white pigments—the voice of sex crying in the wilderness.

There is one feature common to all Oriental entertainments, that they are so seldom entertaining. It is when he is following his ordinary avocation in his own way that the Oriental is most amusing. I have no doubt he thinks exactly the same of us. The Chinese and the Japanese see nothing funny in our comedies; but a Grand Opera company had a good run in Japan, because the Japanese thought that the performance was a roaring farce; and a missionary who gave lectures on the Bible with magic-lantern slides in the Yangtze towns, discovered to his mortification that his crowded audiences were due, not to their interest in the gospel, but to the fact that the dresses of the apostles resembled those worn by Chinese clowns. Everything he said was received with screams of laughter.

Marvels are the only form of entertainment in which an Oriental can hold a European, for he

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does not understand the European impatience of pottering and padding. If a play takes a whole day, as it used to in Japan, and half a year, as it still does in China, the entertainment cannot always be proceeding at high pressure. Europeans demand high pressure. Patience is the proverb of the East.

In Arab entertainments a thing never comes to a head. To the very end they seem to be making preparations for something to happen. They are like a band that never gets beyond tuning its fiddles, or at any rate beyond the recitative. They remind you of the American who went to see the famous dumb play, *L'Enfant Prodigue*, and when he had been watching it for half-an-hour, composed himself to sleep, saying to his wife, "Wake me when it begins!" Take the example of snake-charmers. I have constantly watched them at Tunis, without ever seeing them do anything decided, except pass the hat round for money.

I remember the glee with which we came across a troupe of them at the Kasbah on the birthday of the Prophet. They were surrounded by a large ring of spectators, four deep, mostly Arabs—outraging the Koran's commands about silk with their gorgeous holiday costumes—mingled with a stray French officer here and there. In the centre of the circle was the troupe of four or five dirty-looking old men dressed like Bedouins, in ragged brown camel's-hair cloth,

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two of whom were tumming weird music, more to collect a crowd than to interest the snakes, which took no notice of it when they came out of the filthy skin bags in which they spent their domestic life.

There is always a great tumming when snake-charmers are exhibiting; it sounds like an insurrection, at least. A couple of wild-looking men were wandering round the crowd with tambourines, collecting sous—Tunisian sous. They were quite rude if you gave them French sous, and almost threatened me because I would not give them a franc when they saw my kodak; but I was standing by a policeman, so I felt secure from strong measures, and they were getting too many halfpence from the people to take the only revenge open to them, of packing up their snakes and going.

The audience seemed accustomed to the humour of the snake-charmers, and waited and waited, disgorging fresh relays of sous—the tambourines were piled up with sous, before the chief charmer went to the snake-bag, a sort of irregular golf-bag about four feet long and a foot wide. We were part of a crowd of hundreds marking time till the snake-charmer should feel inspired to do something, though it was only between six and seven o'clock in the morning. The Bey, who had been ill enough to excuse him from visiting his capital for some months, had been expected to arrive at six o'clock on that morning, in

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Photo by Garrigues, Tunis.

SNAKE-CHARMERS.

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the pomp and circumstance of puppet sovereignty. He had not arrived, and we and his faithful subjects were casting about for something to do. Suddenly the big oval of bright-robed Arabs brightened visibly: the snake-charmer had gone to his bag.

All the time he had been talking incessantly, explaining, scolding, beseeching—all with the view, I suppose, to more sous.

Having got all the money he could without the aid of his snakes, he thought it was time for the appearance of the *deus ex machina*. First he pretended to be afraid of the bag; then he opened it very cautiously; then he peeped into it and poked fun into it; and then he thrust in his hand boldly, and brought out a large round stone that might have weighed four pounds. I thought of that particular Bible proverb about bread and stones, and eggs and serpents.

But he was not going to trifle with the interest of his audience so badly as I thought, for he put in his hand again and pulled out a serpent—not very large, an amiable, orange-throated person, whom he proceeded to tie round his neck like a lady's fur boa, and at once set out on a fresh circuit of collecting sous in the tambourine. The audience did not seem to mind the snake any more than he did. They dropped their sous into the tambourine without any *mauvaise honte*. They evidently relied upon the snake being imperturbable, or too attached to his master to leave him.

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The snake darted his feathery-forked tongue in and out with a fine *dolce far niente*. He seemed pleased at the notice he was getting for his master.

The collection was a good one, so the charmer took his live boa off his neck and held it out in his hand admiringly. There is one thing about being a snake, that it makes no difference to your comfort how you are held, by the head or the tail or the middle, upside up or upside down. I knew one accomplished anaconda which could take one little turn round his mistress's waist with his tail, and keep the rest of his body out at right angles to her, without any apparent effort to himself. It must have been a tremendous effort for her, having this snake sticking out from her waist like the handle of a frying-pan. His body looked as thick as her leg.

The charmer talked incessantly to the orange-throated person, who was at length induced to open his mouth to the audience. It was square, like a Gladstone bag, and the tongue moved like a pendulum. Then, purely to oblige, the snake lazily took hold of his master's nose, and hung straight down from it like a dried herring; also from his ear, to make a little variety.

But you could see that he took no interest in it. Snakes are such *blasé* things. They never seem to want to do anything. If that bag had been a golf-bag, and as full of clubs as it was of snakes, the

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most stalwart caddy in St. Andrews would have groaned under it. The charmer pulled them out like clubs, but they none of them tried to come out themselves. They were afraid of having to do something for their board and lodging. I remembered that there was a snake-charmer at Earl's Court who had to get a mongoose, because the British public found his snakes too disinterested; they "bucked up" directly the mongoose appeared.

The sou-extracting power of the orange-throated person having been exhausted, the charmer went to his bag and pulled out a regular "driver," a Cobra Naja about seven feet long. A cobra of this size is very deadly, if his poison fangs have not been extracted. I had no doubt that they were extracted, for the police could not have allowed the charmer to play with such formidable beasts in a crowd unless they first had been rendered harmless.

The crowd were extremely philosophical about the movements of the snake. They did not stir when he showed a disposition to glide towards them, but he showed very little desire to make their closer acquaintance. He merely felt a little distrait when he was thrown on the ground with nothing to do, and his nice homely bag closed against his readmission. But when the charmer spread a dirty blanket on the ground he was quite consoled, and at once got under it, lying straight out. The charmer pretended to

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take no notice of him, and opened his bag again to take out another huge cobra, with whom he began to perform the same sort of antics as he had played with the orange-throated snake, pausing a moment to tread on the other snake's tail, so as to make him dart out of the blanket, for which he gave him a severe scolding.

When he had stopped him by pressing his foot on his tail, the snake taking it all in good part, and when he had lectured him sufficiently, the charmer put the round stone he had taken out of the bag on the snake's tail. Then began about the most interesting thing in the whole performance—the demonstration that, when the stone was put upon a certain place on his tail, this big, strong snake could not drag himself free.

I really thought the dancing was going to commence at last, when the two great cobras raised about a yard of their bodies upright and expanded their hoods, for the musicians were playing their tum and squeak lustily. But the snakes took no interest in such music, nor did any one of them once hiss, any more than they danced, while they were being teased by the charmer.

That snake-charmer performance was very small beer. The snakes who danced not, neither hissed, stood up, as I have described, while their master pirouetted between them and the people, spinning his tam-

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bourine; but they took only the most languid interest in it, and he was always having to stop because the children and the dogs crowded into the play, as if they were at a football match, and even a Cobra Naja might turn like a worm if he was trodden on. Not one of the audience seemed the least afraid of the snakes.

Really the most interesting feature of the entertainment was that snake with the stone on his tail. He was not angry about it, but he was tired of it, and let himself out his full length, first to the right and then to the left, like the steering-chain of a P. & O. steamer.

For a long time the charmer came at short intervals to volley expostulations and gesticulations at me for not giving him a silver franc. I had subscribed about a franc in sous to the tambourine already, and did not mean to give anything more until I saw something worth kodaking. I cured him, in a moment of inspiration, by kodaking him in the act of expostulation. The slightest indication of raising my camera sent him to the right-about.

Finally we went to the right-about ourselves, convinced that snake-charming, like hip-dancing, was too dull ever to watch again, and that the audience is the only amusing thing about an Oriental entertainment.

I never was in a *hashish*-smoking den at the right moment. The effect of *hashish* on the smoker

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can best be compared to the effect of mesmerism, where the patient loses control of himself completely, and can be made to receive any impression the operator chooses. I have heard of headstrong foreigners, who had insisted on smoking *hashish*, doing the most idiotic things. Miss Lorimer has told a capital story of a big, sulky, silent Englishman, who thought he was John the Baptist and behaved as such.

But I am not going to insert a string of Arabic amusements in detail. I have selected hip-dancing and snake-charming as examples of the different way in which the East takes its pleasures. It is the characteristic feature of them, that quite a well-off merchant, instead of going home for the evening, will gravely pay a sou to listen to a story-teller; and this not because there are no evening papers, of which Tunis possesses at least three. It is just his way.

Except in revenge, there is no action in the East. Everything is just looking and suggesting and dreaming.

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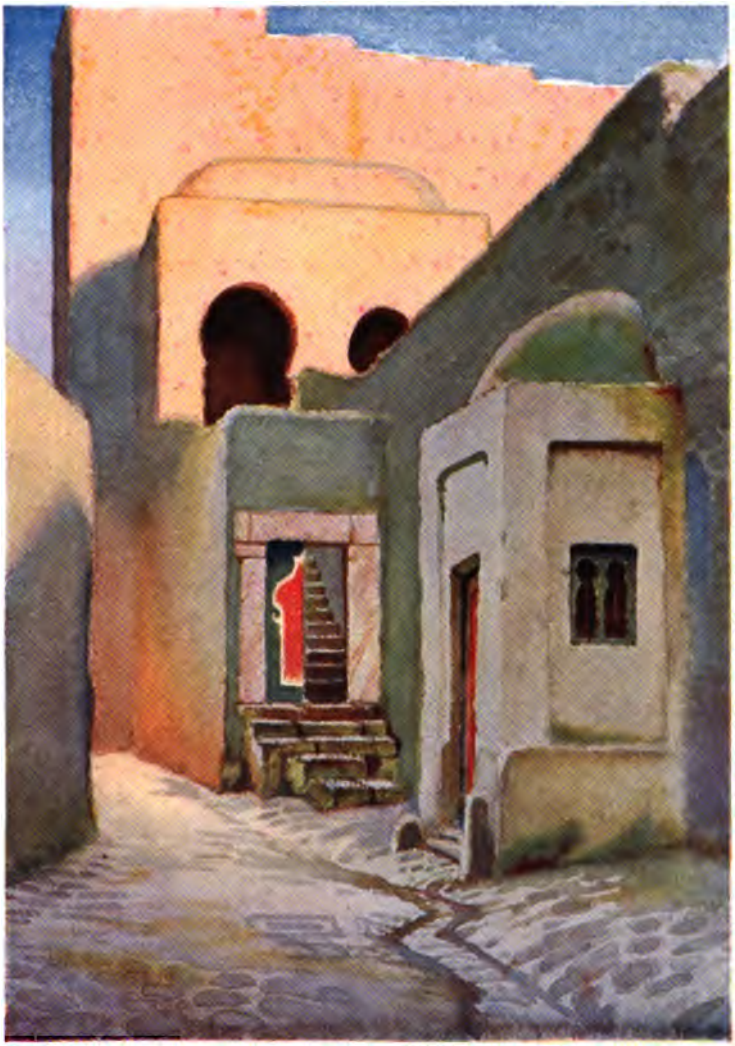

Pinx. Benton Fletcher.

A STREET SHRINE IN TUNIS.

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CHAPTER XIV

GARDENS AND FLOWERS

THE first thing which strikes an Englishman about Tunis, except its Easternness, is its want of gardens. The French Governor is the only person in the place who has a really fine garden. Tunis is as towny as Venice. The boulevards, it is true, have their avenues of juvenile trees, and opposite the cathedral there is a pretty little square laid out with palms and cyperas. There is another garden—oh, such a little one—in front of the palace of the Bey; and once in a way you see a single tree in the precincts of the bazar. But to get a breath of air freshened with vegetation, you must go out to the Belvedere, or the Bardo, or the Château d'Eau. Château d'Eau only means waterworks, wisely imitated from the repaired cisterns of ancient Carthage. But it looks like a fine villa, with a beautiful strip or garden in front of it, in which the oleanders, rose and white, simply riot in May. The oleanders of Tunis are a thing to remember. The blossoms grow

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in such grand clusters, each as full and fragrant as a bouquet of roses.

From the Bardo gardens, too, the impression that you bring away is that of the immense bunches of the flowers, and the bamboo-brake effect of the clumps of oleanders. But one of the sights of the road as you go to the Bardo is the blaze of blossom, crimson and golden, which you see on the long thickets of prickly pear. These figs of India are as full of blossom as the Barba di Giove, the "pig's face," on the banks of Sicily.

From the Bardo we went to Manouba, a suburb where the Tunisian aristocracy have fine villas. I kept a sharp look-out for wild flowers all the afternoon. I must confess that I was disappointed. Perhaps I was too late. I did not begin my stay in Tunisia until May. I saw no wild flowers with which I was not already familiar in Sicily. The richest effects were yielded by the very bright blue, small-petalled borage, and the noble pink convolvulus of Sicily, which is very large and almost as full as a rose.

The only bit of vegetation in or round Tunis which is at all considerable is the Belvedere, or public park, which is on a hill about a quarter of an hour distant by tramway. We almost shouted when we came to this green oasis in a desert of houses and roads. It is really delightful.

The city of Tunis took a hill for its park. In

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that hot land one courts the breeze. Smooth park roads wind and zigzag round it, bordered with superb bougainvillea, eucalyptus, genista, and especially a grand acacia, with mighty yellow blossoms tinged with red, as gay as the heaths of Australia. A pavilion and a casino, white as snow, burst from the deep verdure of the hillside.

The odd thing is that the roads lead past these fairy buildings to nothing. From the hill's flat top you have a glorious view of the lake of Tunis, with Carthage on one side and Bou-Cornein and the little white towns at its base on another. Bou-Cornein has the outline of Vesuvius. The lake of Tunis, like a round mirror, with creamy Tunis, like carved ivory, for its handle, is sometimes, when it reflects the sunsets, almost incomparable among the bays of the earth. Northward the mountains threaten, they are so close. Southward they stretch as far away as Cape Bon. But the top of the Belvedere remains just a flat hill-top, neither wild nor well-kept, which one day, in that land where they conjure with a plaster that looks like marble, will be crowned with some fairy structure fit for Aladdin.

We could not bear the desolation of that Pisgah. We plunged down the grassy slopes to take a bee-line to the pavilion, which I imagine is the Belvedere from which the park derives its name. We used to wonder if this was the famous pavilion transported

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to the Belvedere from the gardens of La Manouba. We had no further thought, but found what we had sought in vain ever since we had landed in Tunis —wild flowers growing merrily. Only one was new to us— a plant tall and graceful as a columbine, with nodding flowers of light bright blue. For the rest, there were the borages, alkanets, vetches, marigolds, and the other flowers of Proserpine's train in Sicily. The floral triumph of this park in May is that wonderful acacia. The tree is low, and has such plumes of golden blossom, and blends itself so readily in close thickets.

Here they plant the bougainvillea in every shrubbery, and let it climb out of the underwood as its wayward fancy dictates, growing, I suppose, as it grew when the stout sea-captain from whom it took its name first came upon it in the isles of Oceania. It is thus that the wistaria clambers round Nikko, in Japan. Who does not love it thrice as well in its native forest as when he sees it crucified on the walls of his house?

But I will say nothing against creepers, for the ampelopsis seems a special dispensation of Providence to conceal the buildings put up by pious people in the reign of Queen Victoria. Even Keble College, Oxford, could not remain obdurate to its charms.

Oh, that deep grass! oh, those merry flowers! oh, those thickets, rioting with blossom already, and, in a year or two, to be tropical in their luxuriousness!

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We forgot our objective in our delight, and, when we remembered it, had quite a work to find the way. That pavilion in the park of Tunis is the most beautiful modern building I ever was in. It is of no great size ; its ambitions are modest in a land where marble and mosaics and exquisitely fretted vaults count for so little : but its grace is perfect. In one second it transports you from the real to the unreal. You feel that you are in the Alhambra, and that the Moors are still enjoying halcyon days in Spain. Seated on a marble bench, you gaze through the snow-white pillars of the arcade on a creamy city, with its outline broken by Saracen domes and minarets, and tell yourself that it is Granada, and that the day of grace has not yet been shut out from Spain, with its Moorish creators, by dour Spaniards.

It *is* Granada in a way, for the Moors, who were hunted out of Andalusia when the Moorish dominion in Spain came to an end, took refuge in Tunis. I have said that there is many a Moor in the bazar who can show you still the key of the mansion in Spain from which his ancestors fled before the conquering arms of Ferdinand and Isabella. You can see the quaint title-deeds, too, for the asking.

Sit there as long as you like in the lotus-eater's air of an African afternoon. When your eyes are

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tired of gazing out at the hot sky and the glowing city, rest them on the cool marble floor, or the fretted vaults of the ceiling.

If Granada is too Oriental, if anything could be too Oriental in such an atmosphere, gaze further East to where the white cathedral of France's sainted king rises on a gently swelling hill between the lake of Tunis and the African sea. There you have one of history's graves, before your eyes, which contains the ashes of Carthage—Carthage, which duelled with Rome for the world as their stakes. That hill was the Byrsa, the citadel of old Carthage. That was the hill unto which Hannibal lifted up his eyes during the fifteen years of his invasion of Italy. That hill is the monument of the greatest treachery, the greatest tragedy in history. Even the tale of Troy were nothing to this, if Dido had linked her lot with the ending and not with the beginning of Punic Carthage.

Yes, that white cathedral was built to recall the fact that St. Louis of France, the most Christian king in Christendom, crusading to purge the sepulchre of Christ, died miserably of the plague amid the ruins of Carthage; but it marks instead where Carthage died, Carthage, which came within an ace of determining what civilisation the world should have. And if there were no food for the imagination in the New and Old Gates of the Orient spread before

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Photo by Garrigues, Tunis.

THE EXQUISITE MOORISH PAVILION IN THE BELVEDERE.

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your eyes, it would be enough to rest and cool in a spot of such perfect grace.

Unwilling were the feet we turned to the Casino below, a cool white palace in the Moorish style, with noble apartments suited for the summer festivities of a pleasure-loving community nursed in æsthetic surroundings. I hardly looked at it; I had left my heart behind me.

There are few trees, few flowers, on the site of Carthage. What trees and shrubs there are, by the sarcasm of events, belong to new worlds undreamt of by the great Carthaginian circumnavigator, Hanno —the aloe of America, the cactus of the West Indies, the eucalyptus of Australia. Flowers, except the hardiest, wither early in the sun-baked cornfields which cover the streets and squares of Carthage. Almost the only speck of green is afforded by lizards, large enough to frighten you, which dart in and out of the stones of a capital given back to nature.

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CHAPTER XV

THE ENVIRONS OF TUNIS

IN this book I deal, not with the regency of Tunis, but the city of Tunis, and Carthage, the dead Queen of the Mediterranean, to whom she is the disinherited successor. Therefore I leave to others the holy city of Kairouan; the historic Roman ruins of Dougga and El-Djem; the ports of Bizerta, Soussa and Sfax, and confine myself chiefly to the Carthage of antiquity, the Bardo of the Bey, and the Ariana of the Jew. Carthage needs not one, but many chapters, having filled more than one chapter in the history of the world. So I shall confine myself here to the other towns on El-Bahira—the lake of Tunis.

To the European eye aridity is the most obvious characteristic of the country round Tunis. A few palms have been planted, but the trees as a rule are hardly more than shrubs. The roads are dusty. Buildings of first-class importance are almost absent. The whole country reminds you of a newly laid-out Australian watering-place, where the tea-tree scrub

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comes up to the backs of the villas and the sides of the road. The villas of the principal Arab and foreign residents, mostly those of the relations of the Bey, stand a little way back, just as the villas of wealthy Melbourne people are scattered round Schnapper Point.

El Ariana, midway between Carthage and Tunis, lies in broad olive-gardens beyond the Belvedere. It is a squalid village. The cottage to which stockbrokers and socialists retire for week-ends is lordly compared to the houses of Ariana, which are one-storied, and about on a level in luxury with the peasants' houses between Naples and Pompeii. But if you go there on a Saturday afternoon, towards sun-down, you can see Solomon in all his glory. Not so much Solomon, perhaps, as the Queen of Sheba; for Solomon is inclined towards clothes that are European in scheme, if certain details, such as a red fez and crimson boots, worn with a frock coat, are suggestive of sunnier continents. The Queen of Sheba is all there, half-naked and unashamed.

There is only one thing to which your first vision of the Jewesses of Ariana can be compared, and that is an army of flamingoes, bursting to rose-pink as they leave the green waters of the bay of Tunis. Flamingo-pink and sea-green are very popular with the scantily-garmented goddesses whom you meet walking with the sons of men amid the dust of Ariana. I say

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goddesses, because any one of them would do for a Hindoo temple, if she had more heads and arms.

The favourite costume of these female Juggernauts is a short white muslin dressing-jacket, trimmed with fluttering pink, which leaves the arms and throat almost uncovered. White satin knee-breeches, embroidered or unembroidered with gold lace, give one the idea of inverted mountains, and seldom reach down to the socks, which form a connecting link between pink legs and patent-leather shoes, all cracks and dust, which only just take in the big toe.

The Jewesses of Tunis always have a high colour, and in the young it is natural. The older women redden their cheeks, blacken their lashes, and brighten their eyes till their countenances flame, and all of them incline to a light, bright bandeau with fluttering ends for a head-dress. I think they must have seen the picture of Lady Hamilton doing her attitudes. Occasionally you see a married woman wearing her little gilt fool's-cap here, but she generally discards that with her veil. What marks the difference between the Jewish woman in the streets of Ariana and the Jewish woman in the streets of Tunis is that they make a sitting-room of the street at Ariana, and behave as they would in their houses.

Until you get accustomed to it, it looks a bit uncanny to see a Jewess, who weighs about three hundredweight and who has a figure like a skittle,

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Photo by Garrigues, Tunis.

YOUNG JEWISH MARRIED COUPLE.

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without the bridal veil of diaphanous white silk, which is thrown over her fool's-cap and hangs almost down to her heels, till she looks like a collapsing tent. But you get accustomed to it, and eventually realise that this horde of fat women, with flowers and feathers in their hair, and hardly any other clothes except dressing-jackets and drawers and hose, are not the companions of Jephthah's daughter, but tradeswomen on an early-closing day.

They have long pigtails and gay plaid or embroidered socks, and some of them have fat white slippers, covered with cheap embroidery, which give the dust a better chance than anything else—and of dust there is plenty at Ariana. They all look as if they had retired for the night, and been turned out for a fire. One lady in really white drawers, a green sacque, and a red head-dress, was in her own person better than most Italian carnivals. An old Jewish lady, who was wearing her gold fool's-cap and had on a light-blue dressing-sacque and riding-breeches, looked quite natural.

Some of the girls, not old enough to be stout, had pretty bare legs and feet thrust into clogs. The odd thing was that all this bevy of vulgarity and corpulence needed such a short distance to make it, if not enchanting, at any rate a very pretty picture of light gay colours and fluttering ribbons and muslins, especially if you went round one of the back streets,

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where the men are not so well off, and therefore content to pose as Arabs instead of Europeans, in the long, loose *djebba* of crimson and green brocade.

Some Arabs go there, too. There is an Arab café lined with matting throughout, and with benches all round its recesses, on which the Arabs recline like ancient Romans at their ease. I think the Arabs must go there on the same principle as they go to the French cafés at Tunis—they look upon other races as a kind of Zoo.

These little pleasure resorts round Tunis, with two or three streets bordered by miserable houses, remind one of Australian watering-places—skinny villages of weatherboard cottages, bordering a sandy road through a clearing in a tea-tree scrub. Sometimes, like Hammam-Lif, they have a casino of sorts, and a hotel to balance the ambitious or unambitious wooden hotel which precedes everything else in the Australian township. In Tunisia you can always watch the natives, but these little *plages* are shoddy and miserable places.

You go to Ariana by a tramway, past the Belvedere and the School of Agriculture, which has been a palace, and which has a rich southern garden round it, giving one a glimpse of the lost glories of Carthage; and you pass at least one delightful Arab villa. The family of the Bey have country houses now, instead of having their heads chopped off.

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Ariana has just something of the atmosphere of Japan about it. Its houses, if mean, are unaggressive, and its inhabitants sit outside their houses in extraordinary Oriental garments, sipping various beverages in polite contempt of your existence unless you try to kodak them. You do itch to kodak them from the moment you leave the tram, but it must be done with great caution, for they resent it almost as much as the Arabs, not from any religious prejudice, but because they think it an impertinence. You get some of your best kodaks sitting in the tram itself, with the sun behind you It is as easy to kodak Jewesses from a tram-car as it is to shoot wild turkeys from a buggy.

Hammam-Lif did not take my fancy. You see there but a cheap French *plage*-village, and, instead of a beautiful Rebecca at the well, you get hideous and filthy Rebeccas at the baths of hot medicinal waters in the old Bey's palace, which are set aside for the use of Jewesses. The palace of the Bey is something; but that something is only large, not Oriental or beautiful, and it is used for a barrack. You are near Bou-Cornein, the Tunisian Vesuvius, but too near to get a good view of it.

The shore looks across the bay at Carthage, but it is so flat that the sea looks higher than the sands and blocks out the view. The waters of the springs are known to be good, and various schemes

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for the enticement of the patient are in progress; but at present the only idea you carry away from Hammam-Lif is that it suggested the architecture of the restaurants at the Earl's Court Exhibition, or that they suggested it.

I never saw anything so like the unmonumental portions of the Exhibition; but the French people, who went there in swarms by the same train as we did, positively gasped with pleasure. The Frenchman asks nothing more than a jaunt on a railway to a restaurant. He does not look at the view, if there is one. Some Frenchmen find sufficient company in their stomachs, others need female society.

The Bardo makes a very different kind of excursion. If you have not seen the Bardo you have only half seen Tunis, for there the Bey lives in an atmosphere of tragedy and comedy, guarded by an Offenbachian army—a puppet with powers of life and death over his subjects to console him for the absence of any authority over his kingdom. He sentences his subjects to death, and has them executed with little more delay than a fowl selected for the dinner-table, though I suppose the French limit him in the list of capital offences.

At the Bardo you can see his palace, the public portion of it, and most of his army, and all his executions. There is much that is beautiful and majestic about his palace, though the Bardo is no

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longer a royal citadel containing within its walls a palace and a prison. The French destroyed the fortifications, though they left the poor Bey his barracks and six small rifled guns, which had been given by French royalties to a Bey before the French occupation, and were not sufficiently up-to-date to signify.

The Bardo itself is very interesting. It is the Windsor of Tunis, the Bey's official suburban residence, and consists of an almost imposing mass of summery Oriental buildings terminating in ruins. The ruins are partly due to the fact that the Beys of Tunis think it unlucky to occupy the palaces of their predecessors. At the back of the palace you get the tea-tree scrub effect again, generally improved from the kodaker's point of view by the fact that the Bedouins have a fancy for camping outside the Bey's palace. It may be handy for begging, and it adds much to the picturesqueness of the scrub to be dotted with browsing camels and the long, low wigwams of the nomads. I say wigwams because I do not know the proper word, and the Bedouins have so many of the habits of Indians. Their presence cannot threaten the Bey, because they are in sight of the barracks, where he keeps about half of the skeleton army allowed him by the French.

No attempt is made to fortify the palace or to keep people outside its boundaries. It can hardly

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be said to be sentried. It is only divided from the road by a narrow strip of garden, planted with superb oleanders with each head of blossom like a great bunch of roses. Inside it is roughly divided into three portions,—the private apartments of the Bey, which are kept as rigidly closed as any other Arab's private dwelling is; the public apartments, in which he holds his courts, of law as well as of state; and the Alaoui Museum. When we went out to the Bardo we had an idea that it was the wrong day, and it very likely was; but we thought we might as well walk in until anybody stopped us, and, having ascended the famous Lions' Staircase, we came upon two degraded-looking Arab servants reclining on the benches which line the entrance of the palace.

I have already commented on the effect of what is practically a large white villa rising out of yellow ruins. Inside, the Bardo is not altogether shorn of its former splendour. The Staircase of the Lions, with its rather superficial white marble beasts and its light arcades, has a noble architectural effect, and this leads into a typical Oriental ruler's palace, through porch and *patio* floored and colonnaded with white marble, and panelled with glorious old tiles, arabesqued in the rich blue of the turquoise when it is beginning to stain with green. We soon found that there is no difficulty in seeing the Bardo—that the only difficulty is to prevent too many servants showing you different things. The

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Photo by Garrigues, Tunis.

THE LIONS' STAIRCASE IN THE BEY'S PALACE AT THE BARDO.

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chief apartments are the Salle du Tron, the Salle de Tribunal, and the Salle des Glaces. The effects of Oriental richness are spoilt by the intrusion of the gaudy kind of furniture and decorations which vulgarise so many French country houses.

In the country in France, only the aristocracy have got beyond the parlour stage. At the Bardo you get the walls inlaid with coloured marbles, looking like brawn, which have such a paralysing effect in the Jesuit churches of Sicily.

The first feature which strikes you about any Tunisian palace is the provision made for the guards to take their siesta. At the Bardo, as Mark Twain would say, this is more so. There are benches as long as the room for the guards to loll on. They are now lolled on by servants, waiting for strangers to turn up, and most anxious to dispense with cards or any other formalities.

The entrance porch, with its exquisite *plâtre ajouré*, and elegant vaultings rising above the light arches and ancient arabesqued tiles, might be a bit of the Alhambra. It is not necessary to describe the various chambers used by the Bey, in which the cultivated eye will admire the vaults of fretted plaster, the ancient Persian tiles, even the pattern-work of gilt and mirrors; and the bourgeois, especially the French bourgeois, will gaze affectionately at thrones and canopies in profuse gilt and crimson velvet. There are some very fine crystal

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chandeliers. These are barbaric, and understood of Oriental potentates. In the Salle des Recéptions there are a number of portraits of sovereigns in the early 'forties, like Queen Victoria, most of whom hoped that their countries would be the residuary legatees of the Sick Man of Tunis, and were doubtless much disappointed at the premises being burgled by the French.

Among the many valuable lessons you learn at the Bardo is the vulgarity of modern Oriental potentates, who inherit certain architectural effects which make you break the tenth commandment, and themselves worship at the shrine of Maple & Co. It is only the English and the Japanese and some Americans who prefer the South Kensington Museum to Maple's. The chamber of the portraits of foreign sovereigns in the Bardo Palace is a fine sermon on the vanity of human wishes. All these illustrious persons either wanted Tunis, or wanted their neighbours not to have it. Like other Oriental countries, except Japan, it was ready to be stolen.

I imagine that the ceiling of the Grand Mosque is worth more, from the artist's point of view, than all the rest of the Bardo put together; but, naturally, I have not seen it.

The Bardo contains a valuable and perfectly delightful museum, made out of the old Beylical harem. It was inaugurated in May, 1888, and opened to the public on April 9th, 1891. To the left of the *patio*,

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of the usual description but now glassed over, is the hall of the women of the harem, rightly pronounced by the guide-book "a gem of an apartment, in the form of a cross with a cupola in the centre, and, leading from the four sides or arms of the cross, four square rooms with cupolas, all covered with lovely arabesqued plaster carvings of every conceivable design." These are in the purest Arabic style, and are pronounced by M. Paul Gauckler, director of antiquities and arts at Tunis, as *chefs d'œuvres* unique in Africa. There is a fine collection of antique sculpture, faïences, old tiles, busts, terra-cottas, glass, weapons, and a complete collection of Arabic cooking utensils.

To the left is the great room of the mosaics, which has a ceiling gilded in the best Arab style. The mosaics, says the author of *Cook's Guide*, are some of the finest in the world. "The floor is covered with one large important mosaic, measuring 170 square yards, the Triumph of Neptune, found at Sousse. The walls are occupied with mosaics from various districts—pagan mosaics from Zaghouan, mosaics of Neptune and the Winds from Sousse, representations of a circus from Gafsa, mosaics depicting a Roman farm found at Tabarca, and from the same place Christian mosaics from the Necropolis, together with figures of birds, fishes, wild boar, varying in size and execution. Here also are collected numerous statues, bronzes, glass, terra-cotta, pottery

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of every kind and age, the result of excavations in various parts of the Regency."

To my mind, one of the most valuable parts of the museum is the large T-shaped chamber, decorated and furnished like the principal bedroom of an Arab prince's palace. I have described its details in the chapter on "How the Arabs live."

Down below there is a collection of antiquities from Carthage, embracing many tombs of the Punic period, chiefly rude ædiculæ with little sunken panels about eight or ten inches high, containing a figure, quite primitive, with the right hand lifted and the left hand laid across the body. There are also a quantity of the stone balls, like cannon-balls, used for catapults, and the heavy clay acorns used for sling-stones.

Less than a quarter of a mile from the Bardo is K'sar Said, the former palace of the ladies of the harem and the winter residence of the present Bey. The gardens and orangeries may be visited if you get permission, which is not always given.

Ascertain from your hotel-keeper that the day you select for visiting the Bardo is one upon which the Alaoui Museum is open. Take the tram from the Porte de France to the Bab-Souika, and change there into the Bardo tram. The road takes you down rather a typical Arab street, between the inner and outer walls, which contains the one fountain

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Photo by Garrigues, Tunis.

THE BEY'S PALACE AT THE BARDO.

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of Tunis worthy to stand beside the canopied fountains of Stamboul. Outside the second gate, if it is late enough in the year, you will see great masses of prickly pear in bloom, as brilliant a mass of colour as a bank of "pig's face" round Naples, when the plants are in blossom. The flower, too, is similar. Then you go beneath a noble aqueduct and are soon at the Bardo, for the electric tram is fast.

La Goletta.—People generally visit La Goletta, the old port of Tunis, when they have finished Carthage earlier than they expected and have an hour or two to wait for the train which is to take them back to Tunis. It may be visited exhaustively in an afternoon. There is a carriage road for cyclists, and it is only sixteen kilometres from Tunis. But if you do not cycle it is better to go by train than by carriage. The road is good; the traveller will find an hotel and several restaurants, and carriages to take him to Carthage, if he reverses the order of things and goes to La Goletta first. There is a bagnio, too, to be visited, if permission is obtained from the authorities.

La Goletta is built astride of the ancient canal connecting the lake of Tunis with the sea. The Arabs call the canal Foum-el-Oued (mouth of the canal), or Halk-el-Oued (throat of the canal), corresponding to the Italian La Goletta and the French La Goulette. To the right and left of the canal long tongues of land stretch north to the hills of Carthage

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and south to the village of Radès. The town is on both sides of the canal. The northern portion includes the town properly so called and an ancient fortress of the Bey. The southern portion contains the ancient palace and seraglio of the Beys, the ancient arsenal of the Beys, to-day occupied by the French troops, and a repairing basin belonging to the torpedo-boats of the station. The canal of La Goulette is now only used for small craft ; a much better entrance has been cut to the port of Tunis.

La Marsa may be reached by road or rail from Tunis, but it is a tedious drive in a carriage. It is a little seaside place, with a *plage* and villas of wealthy Tunisians, besides accommodation for visitors. The palace of the Archbishop of Carthage is here. The town occupies the site of the Megara suburb of ancient Carthage, and is interesting chiefly because its fine gardens are the only features of the district which support the traditions of the glorious gardens of ancient Carthage, so frequently noticed by the writers of antiquity.

Maxula and Radès.—There is nothing in these two little towns, situated on the southern end of the tongue of land which separates the Lake of Tunis from the sea, to repay a visit from the tourist, unless he has abundance of time.

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WHAT OTHERS HAVE SEEN IN TUNIS

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CHAPTER XVI

THE JEW IN TUNIS[1]

TUNIS is so Jewish that, but for the French hatred of Jews, it would be the ideal place for Mr. Zangwill to establish his new Jerusalem. The climate is near enough to that of Palestine; and in such a very Oriental place, the ancient customs and ceremonies of the Jews would not look ridiculous.

The Jews have always favoured it. They began to go to Tunisia under the ægis of Punic Carthage. Ever since the days of Hiram, King of Tyre, and his wise Jewish neighbour, Solomon, the relations of the two ruling races of the Semitic stock had been most friendly. More Jews came in the days of Roman Carthage; and the Jews who were expelled from Spain in the sixteenth century followed the Moors who were driven out in the fifteenth century to the hospitable shores of Tunis. More recently there have been so many Jewish settlements from Italy, especially Leghorn, that the Jews in Tunis

[1] The information in this chapter is mostly derived from Professor Lapie, one of the chief French authorities on Tunis.

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are divided into Livornesi and Tunisians. They have separate synagogues. The principal synagogues of the latter are in the Rue de la Synagogue, Rue des Colonnes, Rue Zarkhoun (Impasse du Masseur); those of the Livornesi are in the Rue Zarkhoun (Impasse Khehl) and the Rue-es-Snadli.

According to Tunisian traditions, Virgil's poetical Dido had a good deal of the Jewess about her: they say she was not only a relation of Jezebel (at which the reader of the Æneid will smile), but also a connection of King Solomon's.

But if it were not for the women you would not realise how many Jews there are in Tunis, for since the French occupation the Jewish men dress, some like Arabs, some like Europeans capped with fezes. These are the people who salute ladies at the Earl's Court Exhibition with, "Madame or Mees, you buy something? Very sheep!"

In the old days the Jews had to wear black and blue. A black fez was obligatory for Tunisian Jews, and a white chéchia for Livornesi. Green was absolutely forbidden them. The older men still mostly wear black and blue; but the younger men, when they do not dress like Europeans, dress like Arabs in fez and turban, burnous, short vest, and very full knickerbockers which are little more than divided skirts. But the white burnous is said to generally distinguish a Jew in Tunis.

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The Chevalier Hesse-Wartegg was rather taken with the male Jews of Tunis. He said that they were only inferior to the Arabs in number and finer in race. Writing in 1882, he said:

"The Jew is known at once by his looks and by his dress. Tall and strongly built, with fine, noble features and long beards, they show still more to advantage in their peculiar, picturesque costumes. They are not bound to wear a certain dress, as formerly, but seem desirous of retaining their hereditary appearance. They have only changed their head-dress.

"Formerly they were forbidden to wear the red fez or chéchia of the Arab, but wore the prescribed black turban wound round a white fez—a kind of nightcap. They have now adopted the red fez, but keep to the black turban, while the younger generation has given up the turban altogether. They are allowed to wear the white turban of the Arabs, but they never make use of this permission. Their short jackets are of a light colour, richly embroidered with gold and open in front; and while the old orthodox Jews still keep to the black trousers, with many folds tied below the knee, the younger generation has adopted light-coloured ones. They all wear snow-white stockings; and the yellow or red leather slippers of the Arabs have been discarded by the Jewish swell in favour of the patent-leather ones imported from Europe, but which he treads down, so that his heel

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projects one or two inches beyond the shoe. A broad shawl, generally richly embroidered, is thrown round the loins, and while in winter his costume is completed by a long circular cloak of light blue colour, he replaces this in summer by a fine cloak of spotless whiteness, called the R'fara.

"Neither the Jews nor the Arabs carry arms; they are not necessary in Tunis, which is safer than most European towns. Stately as a Jew's appearance is, and tasteful as is his dress, it is only so as long as he keeps his fez on his head. Like the Arabs, the Jews are in the habit of shaving their heads, only leaving a small tuft of hair on the top, which has a most ludicrous effect."

Now, in 1906, the shaving of the head has gone out among the Jews. There are sundry laws which a Jew ought to observe in his dress, and sundry customs which he does observe a good deal; but the stranger can only tell a Jew from an Arab because he looks like a Jew.

With the Jewish women it is different. The fly-blown Jewess of Tunis reminds me of nothing so much as a drowned puppy swollen with being in the water, or a bladder of lard. She is mountainously fat, this being regarded [by writers] as a guarantee of domesticity or domestic virtue, and she is the most unsuitably dressed creature in the universe. She has no skirt to hide the fatness of her legs. They are

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covered only with breeches, which, when they are tight, are imitations of men's drawers, and when they are loose are exaggerated copies of the baggy breeches worn by our golden youth, with putties, for various kinds of country sports. Both kinds terminate in socks instead of stockings.

They are made of preposterous materials like brocaded white satin, and the ladies' fat feet are thrust into cheap slippers, so small for them that the heel comes under the arch of the instep. They manage this by folding down the back of the shoe and holding it on with the big toe, and they are always wet or smothered in dust, according to what the weather has been for the last week. The body is attired in a dressing-jacket of muslin or transparent silk, with short sleeves and often a low neck. But the unsuitability of this kind of covering for the frame of a human porpoise is not so obtrusive as in the case of the breeches, because it is more or less concealed by the kind of bridal veil of thin white silk, which they put on as we put on a drying-sheet when we get out of a bath.

This veil is suspended from a sort of brass, and I daresay sometimes gold, fool's-cap, a head-dress which may have been introduced at Carthage by the women who infested the camp of St. Louis, for they were fashionable in France in the thirteenth century. The Jewish women do not veil their faces, but their

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bodies—necessity is the mother of invention. It is difficult not to laugh when you see one of these flesh mountains, with the fool's-cap and the bridal veil, and legs and feet like a peg-top, swaying down the street.

It is easy to distinguish Arab women, though what you see are not beautiful, from these human nine-pins; for they have the erect carriage of their race, and however fat, they wear their clothes better. You can divide them into three classes,—ladies, whom you never see at all; the wives of well-off tradesmen; and the women of the lower class. The last you know because they wear all white, and always wrap their faces up in two folds of black crape, with a narrow chink left at the right height for the eyes.

The middle-class women, who are not supposed to shop, or indeed to stop, in the street, form one of the sights in Tunis. Though the rest of their dress is of a soft, hand-woven white silk, they wear veils of black silk, interwoven with as many colours as a Roman scarf. Their faces are smothered with these, and the only way they can see how to walk is by holding the bottom of the veil out with both hands a foot or more, and looking down at the pavement in front of their feet. As you see them bearing down on you, with their arms stretched out like the yard-arms of a ship and their veils set like sails, you know that you have entered the Gates of the Orient. Like

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the Jewesses and their humbler Arab sisters, they show as much leg as a fowl.

It should be observed that there now are plenty of Jewesses who cram themselves into corsets and incredible European dresses. The effect is peculiarly astonishing if they have been fattened for the marriage market before they left the Ghetto for their mansions in the French quarter. The Jewesses who live there, and dress like Europeans, try to reduce their figures instead of increasing them.

You are told wonderful stories of the methods employed by the Tunisian Jews to produce the mountainous fat which they used to consider a good thing for a future mother of Israel, and (some of them, at any rate, I suppose) good looks in a wife. At ten years old a girl was locked up in a little dark cell, and stuffed with puppies' flesh and other fattening foods.

An Englishman cannot help comparing the custom with the old Japanese idea of making a married woman blacken her teeth. But the Jews of Tunis have discovered a more effectual way of keeping their sons-in-law out of the divorce court—by standing out for a high indemnity, in case of divorce, in the marriage contract.

Divorce is rather a cold-blooded affair among them. The husband can obtain it as arbitrarily as the Japanese husband in the Golden Age, which came

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to an end only the other day. He can put away his wife whenever he wants to. There are no offences which she need commit to put herself at his mercy. But divorce has its drawbacks for the husband. The Jewish father-in-law seems to have taken for his motto the proverb in the *Toreador*, "For soldiers are such slimy things."

A Tunisian Jew goes in for marriage as a horse is entered for the Derby. From the day that that slimy thing a husband is engaged by contract, he must either marry the girl or pay a forfeit; and if he wants to get out of the marriage afterwards, he must pay the forfeit mentioned for divorce in the contract, and return half the property that his wife brought him. There must be some further arrangement, which I have not grasped, for depriving him of the value of the other half of her property, or marrying on Sunday and divorcing on Monday would become the leading industry of the young Moses of Tunis.

But though he can divorce his wife at pleasure, there is plenty of pink tape about it. In the first place, he must write an act of repudiation and sign it in the presence of two witnesses. A Sicilian love-letter written by the professional letter-writer from a person who cannot write to a person who cannot read would be nothing to a Jew's self-justification. Then he has the choice of presenting the repudiation

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to his wife and enjoying a most dramatic moment, or sending it by deputy with two witnesses; and the deputy is forbidden by law to comply until he has been asked twice. The husband is bound to give the divorced wife a sufficient allowance. But the terms of divorce are more reasonable if the woman is barren. The marriage is then simply annulled by the rabbi. In practice the Tunisian Moses does not go in for divorce much, except for barrenness.

Polygamy is legal if the first wife can bear no children, or when she has ceased to bear, even if she has sons already. But it is said that there are only about a dozen polygamous families in all Tunis. Polygamy is too expensive when your wives have a passion for gold lace on their trousers.

The great idea the Tunisian Jew has in marrying is that of perpetuating his race. It is for this that the women are fatted like calves. It is for this that they are divorced if they are barren. It is for this that a dead man's brother is expected to marry the widow, even if he is married already, and is by law incapable of inheriting from his brother if he refuses. If he does refuse, the widow does not let him off very easily. She takes him before the tribunal, and in the most dramatic way seizes his shoe, and throws it down, and spits on it in his presence, crying, "Thus shall it be done to the man who does not build up his brother's house." She has first of all

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to announce to the rabbi, "My brother-in-law refuses to render a name in Israel to his brother." It is rather hard on the brother-in-law, for if he does marry her, and make her a mother, the child is not considered his; but the practice, though still frequent, is gradually falling into disuse.

Marriages that appear almost incestuous to us, like that between uncle and niece, are popular with the Jews in Tunis, who think they are sure to be fruitful. They consider celibacy a crime against the race; a celibate is a murderer according to the rabbinical code. Marriage is on the lines of our prayerbook—not for physical pleasure, but for the procreation of children.

The Jew of a marriageable age is better off than his Arab neighbours; for while it is the exception for the couple to know each other before marriage, there are some love-matches among the Jews—though the Jew, as might have been expected, is apt to marry for more substantial reasons. Most likely the parents know that they can afford to be liberal in theory. The Tunisian Jews are intensely practical about their marriages. They generally have short engagements; but if the engagement is a long one, the young couple are only allowed to see each other at long intervals. Marriage is so much a matter of business that the marriage brokers, who introduce suitable parties, make quite good incomes.

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A Tunisian Jew's wedding is quite what you would expect of the Gate of the Orient. The Mahometan marriage is a contract signed between two families. There is no ceremony at the mosque, no priest at the marriage. It is purely secular. The young Israelite bridegroom, on the contrary, begins by assembling his friends at the synagogue; he recites prayers with a veil over his head; then the cortege is formed and directs its steps to the house of the bride.

There a rabbi presides over the ceremony. It is the rabbi who intones the prayers, interlarded by some "Amines" from the choir of his assistants. It is the rabbi who presents to the young married couple the cup out of which they must both drink. It is the rabbi who breaks this cup. It is the rabbi who superintends placing the young couple under the veil, and who invites the husband to pass the nuptial ring over his wife's finger. It is true that the Israelite says (perhaps in imitation of the Mahometan) that the rabbi is not indispensable; but, as a matter of fact, he is always present, and marriage is with the Jews essentially a religious ceremony.

On the wedding-night, after a banquet which does not include the husband, a procession of torches is formed at the bride's house. The bride is preceded by children, and supported by her girl friends, and is expected to show an ostentatious reluctance. She

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has to look sorry, which is much harder for her than for most Christian maidens who are being led to the halter, as Nathaniel Gubbins would say.

It is not so very long ago that she had to take two steps backward for every three that she took forward. This was so exhausting that an armchair was carried for her, in which she rested at intervals. No doubt the men who carried it encouraged her to do so. The exercise is hard on a woman of her figure, and extra hard after the exertions of the previous week, in which she has a bath—of a peculiar kind. A Jewish girl must be very fond of marrying to face the preliminaries described by the Chevalier Hesse-Wartegg:

"About a week before the wedding, the public festivities commence, when the fiancée, surrounded by her female relations and friends, and accompanied by some musicians, goes to the *hammam* (bath). From this moment the girl is the victim of ancient customs up to the hour of her wedding. She may not open her mouth; she has no will of her own, but has to do what the old matrons command. In the bath her body is covered with a peculiar ointment, which, when dry, takes away all pellicles and hair—the hair of the head, of course, excepted.

"This, her finest ornament, is anointed by the busy matrons with a jet black pomatum, to give it that blue gloss peculiar to gypsies. The eyelids are

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brushed with the little blackened brushes, and painted; the bushy eyebrows, beautifully arched, are further marked by a thick red line, which unites them. Besides dyeing the tips of their fingers, as mentioned before, they also dip their toe-nails into the same solution of 'henna,' which colours them brown. From day to day every exertion is made to beautify the young woman from their point of view."

The one bit of fun she has is the game of hunt-the-chicken which she arranges for the bridegroom and his friends.

In the twentieth century, brides no longer go in for the donkey-race described above. But the procession is still so slow that it would look like a funeral procession, if it were not for the screaming of the children and the laughing of older people. Only a jackass can laugh louder than a Tunisian Jew.

The husband awaits the arrival of the bride on his threshold, and is expected to lift her over it—though the figure of a Tunisian Jewess is so unfitted for this ceremony. The moment her foot touches the floor he puts his on the top of it. Sometimes, however, she plays the rogue-elephant, and puts her foot on his.

Eight days later she plays a most wooden joke on him. She serves him with a fish in which she has replaced the backbone by two wooden rings, set

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end to end. She invites her husband to cut the fish; but, unless he strikes the place between the rings, he may try with all his strength without result—the wood resists the knife. When he gives up, the wife takes the knife from him; and knowing the join, severs the fish at the first blow. This is meant to show that if man is stronger, woman is more adroit—to imply that the husband has the force and nominal authority, but that the wife is going to manage him by the gentle force of tact. But Jewish women are not rich in tact; so the husband remains master.

The Jewish woman is just as much her husband's servant as the Mahometan or the Japanese, or any other Oriental woman. The Jewish household has two meals—the first for the men, the second for the women. A Jewish husband's authority is not quite absolute; and though a girl has her husband chosen for her, the marriage contract cannot be signed without her consent, which is given or withheld without words. Silence means consent, weeping refusal.

Like the Japanese wife, the Jewish wife is expected to work with her own hands for her husband, no matter how well-off she is. She has to make his bed for him, and mix his drinks; and is obliged to suckle her children herself. The boys of the Jews are circumcised eight days after birth. The Mahometan gets it done by the barber, but the rabbi does it for the Jew. The Jewish child is taught to pray,

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and obliged to read the holy books. He comes of age, religiously speaking, at thirteen.

After this, he is responsible for his own sins. It would be very hard on his parents if he was not, for the Jews begin life so early. He is taken to the synagogue, and mounts the tribune to show that he can read the Bible and be examined in dogma and rites. From this time forward he is allowed to cover his head and shoulders with the veil of white linen, striped with blue or black, which Jews wear during religious ceremonies. He is also allowed the more onerous privilege of fasting and taking part in public prayer.

Like every act in a Jew's life, death is an occasion for religious ceremonies. The association of the "Friends of God," holy persons who will enjoy eternal privileges in heaven, come to join with the family in chanting the prayers for the departing. When death takes place, the "Friends of God" perform the toilet of the corpse, which should be pure at the moment when it appears before the Eternal.

They envelop it in a shroud, and lay it on the ground. They range themselves round the dead man and begin to chant in nasal voices; while the women, seated in the courtyard or in a neighbouring room, utter piercing cries and rock backwards and forwards, under the direction of a professional mourner. Meanwhile, the "Friends of God" have dug the grave,

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and they have the honour of carrying the coffin; and then they keep watch over the tomb. These men are not priests; they are pious men associated in order to gain the special indulgence which the contact with corpses confers. These holy undertakers are not necessarily poverty-stricken. Rich men as well as poor men may desire an indulgence; but they form a caste which is difficult of access to those who are not sons of undertakers.

Rabbis preside over the burial and say prayers; but the cult of death demands further religious ceremonies. The rabbi returns to the mortuary on the Saturday which follows the decease. He returns at the end of the week, the end of the month, and at the end of the year. At each of these dates prayers are said for the repose of the soul of the dead man. Death, like every great happening in life, is consecrated by religion.

Most of the indigenous Jews observe their fasts and abstinences. Before a Jew prays, he presses the creed to his forehead, and encircles his left arm and left hand with a copper bracelet ten times. The right arm remains unfettered. This shows his intentions of enchaining his bad and freeing his good impulses. Both the Jews and Mahometans use rosaries.

The Jews are very particular about the Talmud. They teach their children the exact pronunciation of every word. They may not even use a printed edition,

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Photo by Garrigues, Tunis.

MOURNING IN THE JEWISH CEMETERY.

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because printing cannot scrupulously reproduce the form of the original text. Many manuscript copies are made of the Law, and it is common to present one to a synagogue. Professor Lapie says :

"For this reason, a great number of manuscript copies are made. Every pious man desires to give a new copy of the Law to a synagogue. A rabbi of my acquaintance, who had lost a daughter of twenty years old, wished to perform a good work in her name—he caused the Law to be copied. It is a long job, for even caligraphic imperfections must be reproduced. Is a letter incomplete in the original ?—it must be incomplete in the copy. Does a letter cross the others in the original ?—it must cross them in the copy. Even if the text is unintelligible it must be faithfully reproduced. Every criticism, every comment is forbidden. This faithful copy is shut up in the temple, like an idol. It is only shown on feast-days. When its adorers can touch the arch where it is kept with their finger, they carry the consecrated finger to their lips. Sight of and contact with the Law are stimulants to their faith.

"The Jewish rabbis correspond with the heads of Islam. The Jews had their university at the sacred city of Kairouan itself, till the Arabs stopped it. Rabbinical schools, once so important, are being pushed out of existence by the Franco-Jewish schools. They only give rudimentary teaching, like learning

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to chant extracts from the Prophets. Formerly the rabbinical courts had the same attributes as the Mahometan courts.

"From the rabbinical courts and schools, one naturally passes to the synagogue. The officiating priest resembles the iman of the Mahometans. He is not a man of God, he is 'a delegate of the congregation.' His only duty is to read the Law and the Prophets, to recite the Decalogue and to repeat 'Bless the Lord!' While in the Christian churches the priest blesses the congregation in the name of the Lord, at the synagogue, as at the mosque, he blesses the Lord in the name of the congregation.

"In order to have the right of representing his co-religionists, he need only know how to read the Law in the manuscript text. As this text, a minutely faithful reproduction of the original, only contains consonants, it would be useful to the officiating priest to know how to read without the help of point-vowels. However, he is not always capable even of this. An assistant places himself, in this case, next to the rabbi, holding in his hand a modern edition furnished with point-vowels, and whispers to him the pronunciation of the sacred words. The only rabbis who must receive a special education are the circumcisors and the sacrificers.

"The rabbi is not a man of God; the synagogue is not the house of God. It resembles the mosque.

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The mosque, as we have said before, is analagous to a private house, because Allah is conceived as the head of a family. But how is it that Jehovah, who resembles him so little, is content with a similar temple? In fact, the synagogue is only an ordinary house. Often the rabbi inhabits one apartment in it; God inhabits the other. Often a portion of the house is let to merchants. Many public synagogues are lodged on the first floor, the ground floor being reserved for commerce. The ordinary synagogue is an Arab house, a courtyard surrounded by rooms. The holy books, carefully enclosed in their tabernacle, are placed in one of the rooms. The men congregate in the courtyard, while the women appear at the windows of the first floor. The synagogue is not even rich, like the mosque.

"A tourist has spoken of the luxury of Tunisian synagogues; he did not visit them. Two, and hardly two, escape from the general miserableness. They have reached the distinction of a pulpit and wooden niches; they are like a poor provincial church. In the others, furniture is unknown. The squares of tiling which cover the ground and the floor are cracked. Sometimes they are absent, and the faithful stumble into the holes. There is no ornament on the walls. In one synagogue, however, one can see a collection of chromolithographs—General Boulanger, King Humbert; these are the holy icons of a modernising rabbi.

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"This detail in itself shows the character of the synagogue: it is a house, like any other, and the faithful behave exactly as if they were at home. Their attitude has nothing in the least reverential. They talk, they laugh, they joke. Maltzan (*Reise*, vol. i. p. 70) was shocked at their familiarity. He had seen a great rabbi preach 'with his elbows on the table and his head in his elbows. His sermon,' he adds, 'was a humorous recitation rather than a sermon.' The congregation laugh, and often interrupt. I myself have seen the faithful violently interrupt a ceremony, and dispute the order of the prayers with the rabbi. Everything is managed on a happy-family basis."

But any house can become a synagogue. The prayer of St. Chrysostom, in our prayerbook, "When two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them," must have been founded on the Jewish ordinance that whenever ten persons gather together they can hold a service. At this rate there can hardly be a Jewish family in Tunis that needs to go to a synagogue. There are, I am told, any number of private chapels. The likeness between synagogues and mosques, and rabbis and sheiks, is due to Jewish imitativeness of Arab customs.

One of the prettiest Jewish festivals is the Feast of Tabernacles. During this no Jew may eat in his house. He erects a tabernacle on his balcony or in his

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courtyard. It consists either of green boughs or rich draperies. These "tabernacles," with their lamps, are very gay, if the festival does not happen to fall in rainy weather.

No Jew works on Saturdays. His wife does not even cook or sweep or do any housekeeping. Unlike the Arab, the Jews take their holidays very noisily. I asked a Frenchman what was the difference between Jewish and Arab houses. He said, "There is no difference, except that the Jews are dirtier." The Jewish food, too, is very like the Arab; the chief difference is that they eat unleavened Paschal bread and boukhra, a concoction of aniseed, fermented figs, etc.

The Jews of Tunis are great speculators. The Livornesi especially make their fortunes in this way. The Arab likes being a landowner. The Jew prefers to make money. The money-changers, who are to be found in every street and seem to do all their business in the brassy-looking Tunisian sous, are Jews. There are many Jewish bankers, though foreigners do not often have the good fortune to run across them, but have to go to places like the Crédit Lyonnais, where they take from half-an-hour to an hour to change a draft, and never give you any "exchange."

The Frenchman told me, as if it was an odd thing, that some Jews in Tunis make money-lending

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a profession. They are also the principal importers. The builders go to them for their marble, and they have travellers selling the leather to the shoemakers and the raw silk to the weavers. The Souk-el-Grana, the Jews' Market—literally the Souk of the Livornesi —looks like the shop where every article is sold for sixpence-halfpenny in King Street, Hammersmith.

The Arabs are amazed with the evidences of civilisation sold in these cheap-jack bazars; and well they might be, because, without them, they would not have even the mediocre degree of comfort at which they have arrived, just as without Jewish importations of raw materials their industries would almost die out.

In Tunis many Jews are artisans as well as shop-keepers. They breed so fast that there are not enough shops for them. Certain trades are rapidly becoming Jewish monopolies. All the glass-makers and workers in white metal, as well as the goldsmiths, are Jews. The tailors are Jews. But London is no better off than Tunis in this respect. All Jews must have been tailors in the Bible, for there were no tobacconists, and the Levitical laws, by prohibiting usury, prevented them from combining pleasure with business.

In their Golden Age the Arabs, like the Japanese, had their wives for their tailors. The pieces of stuff in which they enveloped themselves did not demand style. The Arab did with hardly any cut; and

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the Japanese did without altogether. The kimono is made of so many lengths, a Japanese foot wide, stitched together, and the burnous is almost as devoid of cut. The Bedouin woman should, to this day, be content with a plain length of stuff, not made up at all, but folded round her like a Greek goddess, and only held together by a couple of brooches and a girdle. But in practice she uses two lengths. The Jew slipped into this paradise like the serpent in his holy books, and suggested the need of increased elaboration, which he met.

The Tunisian Jews have endless enterprise. They are always starting in fresh branches of trade. They are even invading the Arab monopoly of making shoes of lemon-coloured goat's-skin, which cost about three francs and last as many years.

From commerce one naturally passes to character, which reminds you of the leading character in Mr. Frederick Upton's farce, who was a person of no character. He was a German footman, and the lady sent her jewels to the bank. The Arab, who has a nice turn for epigram, says, "The Jews always think of the future: their cupidity is due to this." The Jews of Tunis have much the same opinion about prostitution as the Japanese. It is common, and they regard with equal approval a girl's adopting the oldest of all professions, so as not to be a burden to poor parents. But I am not sure if the Tunisian Jewess

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goes to the extent of giving her earnings to her relatives. All the prostitutes and nearly all the low dancers of Tunis are Jewesses. Professor Lapie, to whom I am constantly beholden for his intimate knowledge of Jewish life, says that the Jews are not very charitable to each other—a failing I have never heard of among other Jews.

You tell Jews from Arabs not by the difference in the style of their dress, but by the difference of its tidiness and cleanness. You know a Jew by his dirt, his noisy persistence, and his greed. Hooked noses do not count here as much as usual. The noses of the Tunisian Jews are heavy, but they are often straight. Their hair is of a muddy brown, and their skins of a muddy green. One respect in which they are better than the Arabs is their desire for knowledge. They crowd the French schools. Whereas, ten years ago, only seventeen Mahometan girls in the whole of Tunis attended them, I have before now mistaken a French school for a Jewish school, there was such a swarm of handsome, red-cheeked, over-developed young Jewesses pouring out of it. The French feeling against Jews is not nearly so strong in Tunis as it is in Algiers. I suppose they have given up in despair. Ten years ago there were thirty thousand Jews in Tunis; and these female monsters are like rabbits. Oddly enough, marriageable Jewesses are rather fond of decorating their heads

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with silk handkerchiefs tied with two knots, like comic uncles use for making rabbits on the walls at Christmas parties.

One is not likely to forget a visit to the Ghetto at Tunis, called the Hara. Its streets are narrower than Venetian streets, and the roads are higher than the front door, because formerly the Jews made a dust-hole of the street. They did, it is true, pay a tax of about half-a-crown a year for its removal, but the Government took no interest in the matter beyond collecting the half-crowns. They did not collect the refuse, so the road grew higher and higher, as it does in the streets of Montreal with successive snow-storms. The smell of such roads in the rain is not nice; but the Tunisian Jews resemble cats in births and deaths, so they do not suffer as ordinary Christians would, though their quarter has always taken the lead in epidemics.

On every doorstep as you pass you see a pretty girl of a tempting age, though it is not her profession to tempt, and her fellow-countrymen would probably not consider her tempting. They prefer mountains of flesh with vermilion-enflamed cheeks, and henna-dyed eyebrows and finger-tips, dressed in the flashiest pink satin and gauze. These monsters almost drag you into their houses. I do not know how much the young Jewess dresses to allure, but she is much more successful than the professionals, for you see

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a great deal of clean bare arms and throat, and bare pink ankles and feet displayed by the open clogs which she prefers to slippers, when she is playing round the house.

You are always welcome to enter a Jewish house, which is built round a courtyard like an Arab house, but generally sub-divided among a number of tenants. Jews seem to love packing in. They will take you all over their houses, the whole family accompanying, and nearly all of them begging, however well-off they are. Each Jewish house contains one enormous and sumptuous bed. It is not used for sleeping, but as a divan for lady visitors. Their pictures are cheap and garish—mere prints. The houses are always untidy, generally filthy, and they swarm with children.

When you have been in Jewish houses you are not surprised that the greatest insult you can offer an Arab is to call him a Jew. It is hardly more surprising that the young girls show so much of their persons, and that the young married women show so little reserve in suckling their children; for among the poor Jews, if a girl cannot get married advantageously when she comes to the age of puberty, she turns her thoughts to prostitution as the other natural occupation for a grown-up woman, and her relatives regard it as praiseworthy that she should mean to relieve them of the responsibility of keeping her. Hence it is that the indecent dances

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Photo by Carrizues, Tunis.

YOUNG JEWISH GIRL.

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described elsewhere at *cafés-chantants* are always performed by Jewesses.

But one ought perhaps to speak differently of the indecencies of the Jews of Tunis. One does not use the word indecent of the poor Japanese, because they live in neither decency nor indecency according to our aside, but in a state of nature. The real difference is that the Jewess of Tunis is not modest, like the Japanese. Her Eden has been entered by the serpent. She has eaten of the fruit of the Tree of Consciousness.

The Brighton of Tunis is out at Ariana. Every Saturday, towards sundown, you can see the strange spectacle at its height. It is not far to seek. The electric tram takes you there in half an hour, more or less, from the Christian cathedral. I shall not describe it here. I have described Ariana itself, and the Jewesses' bath at Hammam-Lif, in the chapter on the "Environs of Tunis."

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CHAPTER XVII

CEMETERIES AND RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES

WHEN the French were occupying Tunis they proclaimed that, where a city capitulated without resistance, it would have its religious prejudices respected. Kairouan, the holy city of Africa, only inferior in sanctity to Mecca itself, providentially defiedthe summons, and Christians therefore have the immense privilege of entering the mosques and other sacred buildings there. But Tunis obeyed the summons, and consequently no Christian in Tunis can enter either mosques or marabouts' tombs or Mahometan schools or cemeteries—or, in fact, anything Mahometan, except the Court of the Cadi.

There is no getting into the mosques at all—one can hardly even catch a glimpse of their courts, for screens have been erected to baffle the curiosity of passers-by. This seems odd when the far more important mosques of Cairo are open to non-believers. It looks more like an obstinate assertion of privilege than anything else.

No one supposes that he is missing very much.

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The five hundred mosques of Tunis are mostly of no great antiquity. They do say that none of the existing important mosques were standing during the brief period that the Emperor Charles V. reigned over Tunis, except as churches. But there are probably a good many columns from ancient Carthage inside one mosque or another. The exteriors are the best. Several of them have *baroque* decorations skilfully handled. One of the principal mosques in the bazar was adapted from a church of Charles V.

Though there is not one of them which can be compared with the great mosques of Constantinople, there is hardly one of them that has not its graces. The smallest of them will have a little tower, with a beautiful Moorish window. The ugliest, to my mind, is the Halfaouine Mosque, in the *Place* of the same name, a splendid place for seeing native life. There is a smack of a railway station or a new town hall about its lofty arcade, and its minaret has no extinguisher.

The best Tunisian minarets are capped by a short steeple, shaped like a candle-extinguisher, coming out of a little turret surrounded by an elegant covered gallery, projecting from the top of the tower like the gallery of the glorious tower of the Palazzo Vecchio at Florence. There the likeness ends, for the minarets are no great height, and are generally hexagonal or octagonal in form, built of stone or brick,

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with decorations in mosaic of tiles or black and white stone. The minarets have not the lofty or slender effect of those at Constantinople, but they are exquisitely proportioned, and gain by having the graceful gallery, from which the muezzin is proclaimed, low down, within easy reach of the unstraining eye.

Very few of the mosques have the clusters of shallow domes which form such a feature elsewhere, though the largest mosque in Tunis—that of the marabout, Sidi Mah'rez—has its great central dome surrounded with little domes, which give it by far the most stately exterior in the city.

Tunis, as an Oriental city, is lacking in grand domes. It has very few, except those belonging to the tombs of saints. The shape of the mosques is probably due to the influence of the churches of Charles V.

If one may trust Arab reports, the mosques of Tunis are in theory Arab houses, the houses of religious associations. They have a gate admitting to the courtyard, round which the various buildings stand. The only Tunisian mosque whose interior I ever saw bore out this theory. It was like a large chamber, which had its floor covered with cheap matting. Its one distinguishing characteristic was that its ceiling was supported by a certain number of columns. I saw it when we were being taken over the school to which it belonged. The door of

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the mosque was open, and there was no protecting screen built across its mouth, because it opened into a courtyard.

I suppose that the whole building was a mosque of considerable antiquity, for we entered through a beautiful old gateway with stone benches, resting on little arabesqued arches, on either side of it, and found ourselves in an old courtyard, whose walls, in the Tunisian fashion, were inlaid with antique Persian tiles with highly involved designs in rich turquoise blue and green. Various buildings opened off it, used for class-rooms and other educational purposes.

The enterprising bazar-guide whom we employed when we had no dragoman with us had obtained leave, goodness knows how, for us to see this school. But the leave only took us into the court-yard, and we were baffled in a truly Oriental way, because no one would come forward to show us anything, and the guide was frightened to take us into any rooms himself. We were left standing a good many minutes by a large open door, and that was the mosque proper. It looked more like a gymnasium. One or two of the mosques, like the Zitouna in the bazar, generally called the Grand Mosque, have handsome arcades in front of them, with columns from Carthage supporting elegant stilted arches.

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The following are among the principal mosques of Tunis :

The Zitouna or Grand Mosque
The Mosque of Sidi-ben-Arous } in the bazar.
The Mosque of Sidi-ben-Ziad

The Mosque of Sidi Mah'rez, near the Place Bab-Souika.

The Mosque Halfaouine, in the Place Halfaouine.

You often catch a glimpse of little schools for little boys, up a narrow stair, as you pass through the Arab city. I don't think there would be much difficulty about seeing over them, if there was anything to see. These Koran schools are just a bare room, in which a teacher, with his back against the wall, is confronted by a ring of little ones, with their shoes on the ground behind them, repeating texts after him like parrots.

I have been into the Sadiki College, one of the chief educational establishments of Tunis. This is a magnificent building, with all sorts of modern appliances, and one of the few fine gardens of Tunis beside it. It is very like a public school in England in its arrangements, with its desks and its maps and its gymnastic appliances in the yard, if you could forget that its two courtyards have graceful arcades of black and white marble, and that its students are richly dressed Arab boys, with salmon-coloured burnouses for the school uniform.

Tunis like other Mahometan towns, abounds in

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tombs and cemeteries. The tombs in the town belong mostly to the Beys or saints, and they are highly picturesque objects built of stone, sometimes with beautiful mouldings, surmounted by mosque domes, generally covered with tiles overlapping each other like fish-scales. Sometimes these tiles are bright green and highly glazed. As a rule, too, the whole tomb is pleasantly overgrown with weeds.

It is exceedingly difficult to enter the tombs of the Beys on any day except the Birthday of the Prophet, though leave is occasionally granted. Most of the marabout tombs cannot be entered by Christians at all, though one of them, in the bazar, has been turned into a café, and is one of the sights of Tunis. There is also a saint's tomb, without any protection, in the middle of the Street of the Saddlers in the bazar, at which every Friday morning decorations of flags, etc., are erected, and offerings of candles, incense, and flowers are made. It is said that the reason why Christians are so rigorously excluded from tombs is because a form of religious observance goes on at them similar to the observances at Mecca. There is a good tomb of this kind to examine outside the French General's house, near the Bab-Menara. Any one can look in through the barred windows, because it belonged, not to a saint, but to a rich merchant.

The tombs themselves are very like those you find in the cemeteries belonging to important people.

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They have low stone columns with turbans at their tops for headstones.

The Arab cemeteries mostly lie outside the city, towards Manouba, and are very dreary affairs, with their mangey pepper-trees and casuarinas and their sprinkling of American aloes. The plants look as dried up as the tombs are tumbled down. The headstones do not look quite so earthquakey as they do in a big Turkish graveyard like that at Scutari, but there seems to be a prejudice against restoring them to the perpendicular. If the tombs belong to men the headstones are turbaned, and if their owners have the further distinction of being connections of the Prophet, the turbans are painted green.

There are a few tombs, belonging for the most part to saints, which have arches and cupolas and flag-staffs. They get special attention when the Arab ladies pay their weekly visit to the cemeteries, carrying the conical candles shaped like very lean sugar-loaves which do duty for corpses in Tunis. Formerly the Arabs used to tether a camel to the tomb of a dead person to carry him to his destination—just as the Japanese, on the night of Bon Matsuri, the Feast of the Dead, launch little ships of straw with lights in them to carry the souls.

We wandered into an Arab cemetery in the innocence of our hearts. We had been so accustomed to cross the Bosphorus and wander about the chief

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cemetery of Turkey at Scutari. It was nobody's business to stop us; all other Christians knew enough to stop themselves. There was no particular interest about it. We walked along dusty roads, semi-shaded by feeble evergreens, between long rows of turbaned and unturbaned headstones belonging to men and women. There was hardly a note of interest in the whole place, except when we were caught photographing a tomb, on which some ladies were placing holy water, while they embraced it. The custodian who caught us was an old, old man; and I am ashamed to say—for his sake—that when I offered him threepence in sous his wrath departed, and so did he (I suppose for fear of seeing anything which he ought not to see), after shaking our hands and kissing his fingers and crossing himself.

Manouba was interesting. We started from somewhere at the back of the Kasbah, and tramped on a long dusty road amid numbers of Arab women. They all carried the sugar-loaf candles, and were nearly all dressed in white, for there was only a sprinkling among them of the middle-class ladies, who hold out at arm's length the black brocade veils like sails. Others clinked as they went along, for their skinny legs were encircled with heavy silver anklets. Bare legs were much in fashion, even when their owners wore beaded white slippers that came from France. One and all showed their legs, though

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they muffled up their heads nervously when our party passed, seeing that it included, besides two foreign ladies, an Englishman and a dragoman.

The doves were so fluttered by my presence that I made my lady friends put up their sunshades and kept to the lee-side of them. Though it was before the breakfast hour, the sun was quite bright. If it was not yet sufficiently oppressive to make hardy women put up umbrellas against its rays, it was ample for purposes of photography, and I had the dire intention of using my camera whenever I got the chance. The chance came unexpectedly. The procession of nervous ladies was brought to a dead stop by a column of French infantry—a couple of thousand of them—marching in the pomp and circumstance of conquerors, with bands playing, and I think, colours flying, out to the Manouba fort. Whenever any interesting women were passing, I photographed the Zouaves.

I was glad we went out to Manouba, for the ceremony of the women offering candles at the saint's grave. It was such a typical bit of the Orient. The Manouba tomb and mosque form a trail of white buildings running down the hill below the Manouba fort. Swarms of women in fluttering white, with an occasional bourgeoise with her dark veil in full sail, passed up the hill to a flight of steps terminating in an arch.

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Photo by Garrigues, Tunis.

A BLIND MUSICIAN.

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By the steps sat negro minstrels, tumtumming. We wondered at their presence, but our dragoman informed us that they were blind. Doubtless they were selected for this reason, though the man who had a stall and sold honey-cakes, sponge-cakes, fig-cakes, Turkish delight, dough-rings, pink-and-white sweets, nougat, and what looked like Japanese beanflour cakes, was in the possession of all his five senses; as was the man who ladled out tumblerfuls of the sulphureous holy water of the saint. Those who know their Sicily well are aware that it is quite the thing for saints to have sulphureous water, although it does not sound saintly.

From time to time a carriage would drive up, and ladies would descend, showing nothing but their legs. Their slaves presented them with carpets. As they carried them up that hot hill they must have wished that they were not ladies, but like the lower-class women, with their light, fluttering white silks. Acting on the advice of my dragoman, I threw myself on the grass in an inconspicuous place, and watched.

Many of the women forgot to veil before they came out of the mosque, and had their faces bare for a few yards. I did not see one that needed veiling. Their faces were as ordinary as their figures, and veiling was enjoined by jealousy, not by the Prophet. But they evidently did not consider him

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an authority upon dress, for even common women wear silk, which he strictly prohibited. The very young girls were often not veiled, and quite pretty. The chief interest in the ceremony lay in the number of the women that it drew together.

The Cadi's Court, oddly enough, at which the Pope of Tunis administers the ecclesiastical law, does not exclude Christians. It is held in a building with a beautiful old black and white marble courtyard which has a fountain in the middle, and fine tracery and arches; it has a prison at the outer end and the Cadi's chamber at the inner. The courtyard is filled with those who have business there, and those who come to look on. It looks outwardly like an Italian Bourse; but when once you peep into the Cadi's chamber the whole spirit of the scene changes. You feel as if you were with Leo XIII. at the Vatican.

The Chief Cadi, the Sheikh-ul-Islam, representing Mahomet himself, is a most venerable-looking personage in a peculiar kind of turban, dressed in orange with pale green slippers. He sits on his feet on a broad, low divan piled with soft green cushions, and looks more like a god than a man, though he is as business-like as our own judges. He sits at the back. In the front sit his assistants, to whom the rival lawyers come up and say things in a whisper.

Just outside the Cadi's chamber is a pink-padded

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room where the mufti judges preside. The dress of the minor Cadis is salmon and orange. There are four of them, with doctrinal differences. At the beginning of a new case the Sub-Cadi opens a roll. The lawyers for both sides advance, and the defendant is led up trembling. A noticeable proportion of the crowd are farmers, in their white-braided, brown camel's-hair dress.

Justice may be dispensed here in a way as primitive as when the kings of Israel sat in their city gates; but there is no mistaking the profound respect paid to the Cadis and their judgments at Tunis. They are treated almost like gods. There is a seat for the Bey beside the Cadi, but he never occupies it.

I shall not attempt in this chapter to describe Ramadan, the principal event in the Mahometan calendar, but I have sketched it briefly in another place.

One thing more remains to be noticed under religious observances—the Tunisian equivalent to the dancing Dervishes of Constantinople. To see them one must go to Kairouan, where strangers are admitted freely to see the religious observances of the Kouan of the Aissaouia.

Mr. Broadley, in his *Tunis Past and Present*, thus describes the mortification of the flesh practised by the Aissaouia in their sanctuary at Kairouan:

"The hall had been evidently decked and garnished; the lamps burned brightly in the cupola amidst the

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golden balls and ostrich-eggs; the sheikh was clothed in a rich silk robe of office and an awe-inspiring green turban; and a row of rush-seated cane chairs was waiting to receive the expected visitors. In ten minutes six or seven hundred Arabs filled every inch of available space. The Sheikh Hamuda took his seat in the centre, surrounded by the musicians, and an old blind Aissaoui, guided by a little girl, came in gently from a side door and sat down beside him. The Aissaouia themselves occupied the whole space covered by the cupola. The aisles contained the Moslem spectators of the first religious rite ever witnessed by Christian eyes in the holy city of Kairwan. Amongst the Aissaouia I noticed grey-bearded and decrepit old men, many sedate-looking shopkeepers I had previously seen in the bazars, half a score of the Bey's soldiers, and a dozen children under twelve years of age.

"The sheikh struck a note on a drum; the musicians began to play a peculiar and monotonous tone, gradually increasing in intensity. After a pause several of the Aissaouia rose, and, swaying backwards and forwards shoulder to shoulder, shrieked a chorus to the sound of the drums. The music quickened, and so did the chorus. Then one of the most wild-looking of the singers began to throw off his clothes, and passed down the line to urge the others to shout with renewed energy. Then one of the Tunisian

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soldiers (he wore the Bey's brass badge on his red cap) seized a sword and began to lacerate his stomach. The blood flowed freely, and he imitated all the time the cries and movements of the camel.

"We soon had a wolf, a bear, a hyæna, a jackal, a leopard, and a lion. One man knelt down before the sheikh, and holding two long prongs to his sides, insisted on their being driven into his flesh with blows of a mallet: this was done. A mere lad did the same thing. A burly Arab passed an iron skewer through the upper part of his nose and transfixed the skin of his face below the eyes. He rushed apparently towards us. Two or three powerful men knocked him down, and held him till the sheikh laid his hands on him and whispered some mysterious formula in his ear. Another man in quick succession swallowed more than twenty large iron nails, there being no mistake whatever as to his really doing so. A large bottle was broken up and eagerly devoured.

"The frenzy then became general. While one Aissaoui plunged a knife through his cheek, another transfixed his shoulderblades with a prong, and a third pierced his hand. A brazier of cinders was speedily emptied. Twenty different tortures were now going on in twenty different parts of the hall. Three large bushes of the thorny fig or prickly pear were eaten up in almost as many minutes; and at last, before we had time to prevent it, a living sheep was

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thrown into the midst of the maddened Aissaouia; it was in a trice torn into shreds by eager hands and still more eager mouths, and its still quivering and bleeding flesh gnawed to the bones with apparent relish. We left the college of Sidi Aissa as quickly as we could, and the orgies waxed more furious and more horrible in our absence."

The tombs called "marabouts" are numerous at Tunis. As they differ from the graves of ordinary mortals, you can make a list of them by going through the town and its suburbs. You will find a white cube surmounted by a white or green cupola in almost every native street—a marabout (the word "marabout" designates the tomb of the saint as well as the saint himself). They are of all sizes; from the great *zaouia* of Sidi Mah'rez, with its giant cupola surrounded by secondary cupolas, like a planet by its satellites, to the little tombs hidden beneath grass. They are in all states of preservation, from the venerated and popular marabouts, dazzlingly white, to the marabouts which have passed out of fashion and whose walls have become tarnished and haunted by lizards.

There are saints of every kind. Sidi Mah'rez, patron-saint of Tunis, was a tolerant and beneficent man: he it was who permitted the Jews to settle in the town. Another, who died in the gutter, was, it appears, an arrant drunkard; but he was nevertheless sanctified, and a marabout was built on the spot where he

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fell for the last time. Women as well as men were canonised, madmen as well as sages. Even Christians have become marabouts. I do not refer to Cardinal Lavigerie, whom the Arabs, using a simple analogy, named the "Red Marabout"; but, near Carthage, on the promontory which points the way to France, rises, under the name of Sidi-bou-Said, the tomb of our St. Louis. According to Arab legend, the Christian king became a convert to Islam, and his body reposes in Mahometan soil. On two neighbouring hills you can see two tombs of St. Louis—the cenotaph erected by Louis-Philippe at Carthage, and the Mahometan tomb at the Arab village, besides which he has one at Monreale, in Sicily, and one in France.

There are many avenues to sainthood. Some are marabouts without wishing to be; others acquire the title by their good works. Some involuntary marabouts must be cited. Sanctity is inherited. There are men living at Tunis by the piety of their ancestors. The profession of marabout is lucrative. The faithful are not content with making offerings of oil, candles, and chants; their gifts are often negotiable. Custom demands that to certain saints sheep-skins should be given, and to others olives. Near Tunis rises the marabout of Sidi Ali-el-Attab. Every Thursday the road to the sanctuary is lined by pilgrims. The revenues are so appreciable that two branches of the

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family are disputing them in the law-courts. The *Journal des Tribunaux Français en Tunisie* contains the verdict in a similar lawsuit. So it will be seen that, if they do not inherit the piety of their progenitors, the sons of marabouts retain at least their temporal advantages.

The heirs of saints are not the only involuntary saints. It is enough to be born on sacred soil to be a marabout. Finally, madmen are considered saints.[1] One often meets bareheaded Mahometans in the Arab quarter, and to those who know native customs an Arab without a chéchia is a kind of absurdity ; but he is a madman, and madmen are beloved of Allah.

Such is the prestige of the insane that one of the means of earning the title of marabout is to simulate madness. The Dervishes, with their vermin, are artificial madmen. All their eccentricities are due to a desire to appear mad. One of them, whom you can still see in the quarter of Rhamdan-Bey, is believed not to have changed his linen since his youth. He is a very respected marabout—he works miracles, rain does not wet him, and he cures sick persons.

Lastly, there are marabouts who owe their title to their merit. It is their charity which has canonised them. Often, it is true, the saints do not suspect

[1] Maltzan (*Reise*, vol. i. p. 86 *et seq.*) insists on this point with some exaggeration: "The madman cannot sin. If he drinks wine, it is not wine; if he commits adultery, the woman is not a woman, but a houri."

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their own virtues, for the benefactions are supernatural. Sometimes it is only after their death that their saint-like qualities are discovered. A dream may reveal that the defunct man had influence with Allah (Lapie, p. 248), and speedily a cult is established. To this very day, at Tunis, there are legends in the making. A saint had her cult in a neighbouring village. One night she appeared to one of her faithful, and declared to him that her tomb was in a cemetery five hundred paces from the walls of the town. The cult was immediately transferred to the spot designated by the saint, and the revelation stimulated their faith. The tomb of Lella Manouba is the object of a "perpetual adoration." The Jews honour some of the Mahometan marabouts.

The Jews have their own marabouts. The most venerated, at Tunis, is the Rabbi Simeon. His legend is very vague. It is said that he stopped a plague by sacrificing himself for his co-religionists; he prophesied that his death would mark the end of the epidemic. He was, in fact, its last victim, and this coincidence conferred upon him his apotheosis. If his fête is better celebrated at Tunis than in all the rest of Jewry, it is due to the fact that after his death it was owing to him that a massacre projected by the Mahometans was stopped.

His fête is a fête of flowers. It is in the evening. The Jews, surrounded by their children,

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carry to the synagogues candles stuck in bunches of flowers. Each family forms a little procession. The synagogues are illuminated—for several weeks past oil has been collected in each quarter in order to fill the lamps, and money to pay the expenses. Every one, as he arrives, puts down his candle and his flowers. The walls are masked in bouquets, transparencies, and candles. An odd perfume—a mixture of oil, perspiration, rose, and jasmine—fills the temple. Crowds of people move about, go to see the Book of the Law in the tabernacle, drink, chatter with no respect of place; and then every one goes away to drink boukhra in honour of Rabbi Simeon.

The Jewish marabout is canonised by public opinion, like the Mahometan marabout; it is his virtues or his miraculous powers which confer this dignity on him. The source is not dried up. Scarcely two years ago a rabbi died in the odour of sanctity. All the Ghetto assisted at his obsequies; every one wanted to carry the body in order to gain an indulgence. In spite of the efforts of the police, who were forced to give in, the bier was taken bodily out of the hearse and held up by pious hands, for it is especially useful to venerate a saint at the moment when he is going to appear before God. Like the other two monotheistic religions, the religion of the Israelites does not forbid the people to believe in saints. As God does not wish for partners, they give Him friends.

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Photo by Garrigues, Tunis.

THE SIDI-BEN-ZIAD MOSQUE.

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The administration of the Habous, which deals with mosque property in Tunis and is located in the beautiful building which every tourist notices on his way to the bazar, is too technical a subject for me to treat here.

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CHAPTER XVIII

SUPERSTITION IN TUNIS

By E. M. Stevens

AFRICA, the Black Continent, is above all others the continent where superstition, the Black Religion, is kept alive. In Central Africa it is the only religion: but in North Africa, the Black Religion lives side by side with the White; it lurks underneath every act of life; and, without taking it into account, it is impossible to attempt to comprehend the Arab or Negro mind. The dethroned gods of the old time, Baal, Tanit and Ashtaroth, Isis and Esmun, still survive, disowned, unnamed, and hidden in its shadow. The old worship masquerades in the new.

All Islam worships under the crescent, the ancient symbol of the moon, the sacred sign under which the East worshipped while Abraham was as yet unborn. The handprint of Fatma, which greets you at every turn in Tunis, and whose silver facsimile is purchased by every right-minded tourist, existed long before Mahomet and his daughter Fatma had seen the light. For on the votive tablets in the Lavigerie

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Museum at Carthage you will see this self-same hand-print, of the same thick-fingered pattern, like the familiar trademark of Allsopp's ales and stouts, or a hand in a woollen glove. But the Punic inscription above the hand has been thus translated by Dr. Davis :

To the Goddess, to Tanit, the Countenance of Baal,
To the Lord Baal Hammon, a man vowed—
Even Arshamban, a votary of Ashtarte and a filial
Devotee of Ashomon: as thou hearest the supplication, do thou bless.

So that it may safely be declared that this hand, which is to be seen everywhere, has descended from Tanit, Goddess of Love and the Moon, to Fatma, daughter of the Prophet and patroness of modest and pious Mahometan maidens. You can buy this hand of Tanit, as I prefer to call it, in silver in the Rue d'Église for less than a franc; you can get it set with precious stones at the French jewellers in the Avenue de France for twenty. Jews hang it on their watch-chains as piously as Mahometans ; and the poor countrywomen who come into town unveiled, and clad in their single garment of blue, often wear as many as half-a-dozen in one form or other. It is daubed on almost every door, and printed in paint, or even blood—only bullock's blood—on almost every whitewashed wall in this white city.

The very word "amulet" is derived from the Arabic "hamalet," a pendant, something worn round the neck or body as a charm, and so it is no wonder

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that the Arab, the godfather of the word, has an endless quantity. Bedouin women are particularly fond of them; perhaps, as they go unveiled, their risks of encountering the evil eye are greater than those of more sequestered sisters.

I stopped a pretty Bedouin girl in the bazar one day, and, through our dragoman, asked her to let me examine the barbaric necklaces that she wore round her throat and across her bosom. She was a walking museum of amulets. Round her neck she wore a triple silver chain linked at intervals with long strips of pierced coral and bright beads; and from the central disc depended five other chains—one terminating in a crescent, another in a fish that was more like a spade, a third in a hand of Fatma, and the two others in triangular discs. Each bore a magical inscription.

A little further down, from shoulder to shoulder, held by the same rough metal brooches, like ancient fibulæ, that keep their unsewn garment together, was another string of coral and bright-coloured beads, from which fell at regular intervals seven silver chains, each ending in a small silver square or diamond inscribed with a magical sign or blessing. But the third was the most marvellous of all. Like the second, it was fastened from the shoulders by means of rough brooches; but it was a regular festoon of curiosities. It comprised pierced coral (potent in all countries against the machinations of witches), lumps of amber,

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two brass trouser-buttons, the broken neck of a china bottle, a black horn, some Phœnician beads, a cowrie, another shell, a large human tooth, two boar's tusks soldered together into the form of a crescent, a blackened bone, bright blue beads, a lump of a greenish substance; and in the centre, as a chef-d'œuvre, a lump of a brown substance as big as a baby's fist, into which pieces of jade and amber and coral had been dabbed, like almonds in a wedding cake. I asked Bachir what this might be, and he told me that the brown substance was a hardened paste composed of all the herbs serviceable in warding off the evil eye. In addition to these chains she wore two hands of Fatma, one of brass stamped with a fish, and the other of white metal. Her arms were tattooed with a fish and an egg.

When I made her a sporting offer of seventeen francs for the lot, I never expected that she would assent. But the sight of the money was too much for her poverty, and she unbrooched the three chains and handed them over without a sigh. Two days afterwards we met her in the bazar, with a new string of amulets round her throat and a face as smiling as ever. She had tempted another Bedouin Eve with a portion of her seventeen francs, and was once more well furnished against the evil eye.

The fish which she had tattooed on her arm has a long and varied history. It is found alike on Punic

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tablets and Christian lamps of Roman days ; it served both the votaries of Ashtaroth and those of Christ as a symbol. Now Ashtaroth, or Ishtar, was the Semitic goddess Semiramis, queen and deity, whose mother, Derceto, was worshipped by the Philistines and Syrians side by side with Dagon. She was represented with the face of a woman and the body of a fish, and her most famous temple was near a deep lake in the neighbourhood of Askelon, which abounded with fish.

The Syrians had a romantic story about her. The Goddess of Desire, having conceived a jealous hatred of Derceto, caused her to fall in love with a young Syrian, whom she subsequently murdered, and then threw herself into the lake, where she was transformed into the shape of a fish with a woman's face ; for which reason Syrians ate no fish, but worshipped them as gods. The Christian meaning of the symbol is, of course, well known. In Tunis to-day, whatever its history, it is adopted by Arab, Jew, and Sicilian alike, for what reason they cannot tell you, except that it wards off ill-luck, which is as capricious as the sea.

The egg has always been a symbol of life-in-death, and for this reason is accredited with occult powers The crescent-moon is another great primitive symbol, dating from the time when the sun by day and the moon by night were the givers of life and death

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and love and mysteries. With its two horns it is useful in baffling the evil eye, as are the goat- or ox-horns, so ordinary in Sicily, which are attached to the lintel of every prudent Tunisian householder; and the horseshoes which, with their points upwards, serve the same purpose all over the world.

As for the beads that my pretty Bedouin wore, blue beads are potent charms—you will often see a solemn brown Bedouin baby whose chief clothing consists of a few blue beads and some cowrie-shells. As might be expected, the phallus and the bean are as great favourites in Tunis as talismans as they are to-day in Sicily, and were yesterday in ancient Greece; and the Arabs and Jews do not see anything odd in wearing little metal boxes engraved with scenes from the Bible, or in carrying medals of the Virgin, St. George and the Dragon, and other Christian symbols as amulets.

I asked our cheerful Arab guide, a boy of seventeen or thereabouts, whose name was Mohammed, what the evil eye really was. He replied, "If I take many foreign visitors round the town, and am growing rich and happy, it may happen that some man in the bazars will see me and envy me; or perhaps he may owe me a grudge for having rescued a visitor whom he was trying to cheat. He may say nothing to me, but when I pass his shop he looks at me like this"—Mohammed regarded me with mimic

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malignance—"and wishes me evil. If he does this, my good fortune will cease: the visitors will take the other guides and refuse me; I shall have endless misfortune, and everything will go wrong."

I told him that henceforward I would take precautions against the evil eye, and accordingly the next morning he brought me, from a friend who was a magician and could read thoughts, two small triangular scarlet leather cushions, joined by a knotted scarlet strap. He would not tell me what they contained, for fear of breaking the spell, but I suspect they contained magic herbs, or blessed sand, or a text from the Koran. Bits of the Koran sewn up in leather and worn round the neck are very popular.

From this day forward Mohammed took pleasure in pointing out amulets and other charms to me as we went along. The harness of the gaily caparisoned horses and mules is literally embroidered with them, from crescents and fishes and the emblems of Tanit to rows of cowries, strips of red cloth, and jingling whirligigs.

If you look at the doors in apparently blank walls which are the outward and visible sign of a Mahometan house, you will notice that their sea-green or peacock-blue surface is heavily studded with nails, and that these nails are arranged so as to form symbols of good fortune. The emblem of Tanit which I mentioned above is a favourite pattern—it looks

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like a Halma counter furnished with two extended arms, and has been in use from the days of Hannibal to the present day. Another favourite pattern is the interlaced triangle common all over the mystical Orient.

It never occurs to the uninitiated stranger that the black and white masonry so dear to the Tunisian architect has any connection with superstition; and yet it is so. Messrs. Alexander Graham and H. S. Ashbee, in their *Travels in Tunisia*, give the reason for the Arab partiality for alternate black and white stones in building:

"They tell you that the black stone, especially when it occurs as the keystone of an arch, the one black spot where all else is of dazzling whiteness, is symbolical of sin. No human work is perfect. To attempt perfection would be an act of defiance to the spirit of evil, whose powers of destruction are illimitable. The black stone, emblem of imperfection, becomes a homage or sign of concession to this power, and thus secures the protection of all the other stones of the fabric—the white stones without spot or blemish."

The ruling families of Genoa, like the Doria, arrogated to themselves the right to build black and white palaces and churches. Were they unconsciously employing the Mahometan's badge of sin and concession to the powers of evil? It is more than probable, because the Genoese, who shared with the Venetians

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the transport of the Crusaders, were constantly in contact with the Saracens during most of the Middle Ages. The idea of averting the jealousy of gods or spirits from a splendid building is found as far east as Japan, where one of the columns of Yomeimon, the most beautiful building at Nikko, was erected upside down, and is known to this day as the evil-averting pillar. This superstition goes back to the earliest times, as the story of the Tower of Babel in the Bible proves.

As to the things you may or may not do, speaking occultly, their name is legion. You will be doing a very tactless thing if you admire a pretty Arab or Jewish child in the presence of his parents; they regard it as a malignant tempting of Providence. The most you are allowed to exclaim at is his clothes. You are regarded with hostility instead of gratification if you kodak an Arab. Arab women are especially indignant, and shuffle away into shelter with as much speed as their figures and coils of clothes will allow.

This is not so much because the Prophet has forbidden the imagery of living beings, which would only endanger *your* soul; but because, if you get a facsimile of them, you or any other evil-wisher may bring disaster on them by pricking or burning the likeness. This is first cousin to the mediæval and ancient Greek idea of making a waxen image

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Photo by Garrigues, Tunis.

THE COURTYARD OF A RICH ARAB'S HOUSE, SHOWING THE FAVOURITE BLACK AND WHITE ARCHITECTURE.

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of the hated person, and then wasting it slowly at a fire, with incantations, so that his flesh may wither and pine like the melting wax.

Mr. Vivian, in his *Tunisia*, adduces another reason for this hatred of photographers:

"Tradition adds that, in the next world, the makers of images will be haunted by their creations, all clamouring to receive souls. 'I had no desire to be called into being,' an image will say; 'but as thou art responsible for my existence, complete thy work and bestow on me a soul.' And, as this is beyond the power of the image-maker, he will be haunted everlastingly. If, however, he be an infidel, and one, therefore, who has no abode in the realms of bliss, the image may have recourse to its living likeness, if a Moslem, and his eternity may be made miserable as an accessory to the sin of an infidel."

Bedouin women do not apparently share this objection; the sight of a ten-centime piece makes them willing to take the risks of mere eternity, and they are capital models. The Arabs look upon an artist with more toleration: perhaps they judge by the standard of their own limners, whose representations would not be sufficiently like anything in heaven or earth to haunt the originals in the next life.

In speaking, the Arab has to be very careful not to use unlucky words. He sprinkles his conversation plentifully with references to Allah, not

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so much out of piety, but because it is lucky. He will never use the ill-omened word *kemsa* (five) in counting; but says instead, "as many as I have fingers on this hand," which, though lengthy, is safe. So long has this poor numeral been ostracised, that Bachir told me that well-brought up women look upon its use as extremely ill-bred.

Akhal (black) is another most unfortunate word, and you are obliged to think of some equivalent—"dark," for example. If you are asked to state positively what colour your horse is, if he is black you must not say *akhal*, but *adhem* (glossy). You are never allowed to say that the door is *shut*; if you wish to convey this, you have to say that it is *open*, with a peculiar intonation which implies the opposite. It is equally impolitic to use the word *nar*, which means "fire." You must say instead *el haffia* (peace, or tranquillity).

It is extremely unlucky to meet a Negro first thing in the morning, or an old woman. The only things you can do in such a case are either to make the "sign of the horns"—that is to say, extend the hand with the forefinger and little finger pointing upwards and the two middle fingers closed down on the palm; or to make the "sign of five"—stretch out your hand like a hand of Fatma, with its fingers separated; another antidote is to spit over your left shoulder. Spilling wine is lucky, strange to

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say; but spilling salt, as in England, is the forerunner of sorrow.

You are fortunate if you meet a madman, for a madman is a saint, or marabout, and if you succeed in touching him, or kissing his garment, it will bring you good fortune. It does not follow that all saints are madmen, however; and if a sane saint blesses any little article you may have about you, by blowing on it thrice and uttering some formulas or incantations over it, it will act as a talisman for ever afterwards. The bazar saint who commenced his campaign with us on the Night of the Prophet, obliged us by sanctifying various objects in this way; and besides this, he blew on his beautiful amber rosary, and bade me hold it against my heart for three minutes, which would bring me good fortune for some time to come.

Fortune-tellers and crystal-gazers ply prosperous trades in Tunis, without fear of being prosecuted for obtaining money under false pretences. The commonest sight is the sand-diviner. You may come across him any day at the Bab-Souika, seated in sackcloth and ashes in the centre of an intent crowd, poring over the sand which he has spread on the sacking before him; he has his magical books beside him; his meagre body is bent with occult studies. His fees are not large: for a penny he will reveal your inmost thoughts.

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One day I stopped beside him, and a Berber, porter, who knew some French, offered to act as my interpreter. The diviner, he said, would answer the wish of my heart. I was asked to take a handful of the sand into my palm, look at it steadily, and think of a question. I did so, and the question I thought of was connected with the movements of one of my friends and a large town in Italy.

The diviner took the sand, sprinkled it over the rest, and made seven rows of indentations with his finger-tips. Then he obliterated them and made a fresh seven rows, consisting of alternate fours and threes. Again he obliterated it, and a third time he traced mysterious symbols. Then he began to speak, the porter acting as interpreter. I am bound to say that his divination of my thought was sufficiently near the truth. He described my friend, and added, "You will not go to the village (*sic*) of which you are thinking." This practically answered the question I had put, if for village I substituted town. Unfortunately the porter was a poor go-between, or I should have had another pennyworth.

Arabs are strong believers in ghosts and goblins, djinns and demons. They will gravely tell you that they themselves have seen djinns. Dr. Davis, who was sent out before the French occupation to excavate Carthage, used to listen to endless tales of this kind. I must quote one of his stories, which illustrates

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the enormous credulity of the Arab, who will not strain at either gnat or camel where the marvellous is concerned:

"Elgaabsi is a public notary of Tunis, and has formerly studied at the *medresah* (college) attached to the great mosque of that city. Being a particular friend of mine, he came to visit me at Carthage, and related the following adventure:

"'Whilst a student at the Jama Ezaitona (the Olive Mosque) I made the acquaintance of a very skilful Morockeen, who one day asked me whether I would accompany him to raise a treasure. I agreed to do so, partly from curiosity, but chiefly from a desire to obtain the portion he promised me. On the evening appointed the Morockeen and three others, besides myself, left the city just as the gates were being closed, and proceeded to the *somma* (the hill on which the chapel of St. Louis stands), which we reached when only two hours were wanting to midnight.

"'We rested ourselves about an hour, after which our guide took us to a fragment of ruin on the southern slope of the hill, where he desired us to remain perfectly silent, and instructed us not to be intimidated by anything we might either see or hear. He could not tell us precisely what would happen; but "whatever may transpire," he said, "give no audible utterance to your feelings, whether of fear or

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of joy; for if you do, our labour will not only be in vain, but the treasure itself will be lost to us, and will have to continue in the bowels of the earth another century."

"'Having said this, he lit a small lamp and commenced his incantations. He stood in the centre, and we at the four cardinal points of the compass, only about four or five arms' length from him. He then blew into a small flame the coals he had brought in an earthen vessel, and threw a variety of incense into it. No sooner did the smoke of the incense commence to ascend, than he made a last imploring sign to us neither to move nor to utter a sound, and threw himself flat on the ground.

"'In a few seconds we felt the ground beneath us heave like the waves of the sea, so that we had the greatest difficulty to stand erect. Tremendous noises, like the sound of thunder, at the same time assailed our ears. By the dim moon we could discern hosts of cavalry, in the plain below, galloping up towards us, with their guns and lances aimed at us. They rushed upon us in the most furious and threatening attitudes; but no sound—not even that of the hoofs of their spirited steeds—could we hear, and they and their riders seemed to vanish when only within a few paces of us. But this strange army thickened; the fierceness of their countenances and their threatening posture increased, while, at the

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same time, we distinctly heard the clangour of chains, and other extraordinary noises underground.

"'Although trembling from fright, as you may easily suppose, we stuck to our post, and obeyed to the very letter the Morockeen's instruction. But now huge masses of rock above us began to stagger, and, as if hurled by some supernatural and invisible force, commenced rolling down, with the utmost velocity, in the very direction of the spot where we stood, threatening us with instantaneous destruction. The fear of death overcame our love of treasure. We fled with the speed of lightning, and called for mercy at the top of our voices, never stopping nor looking back till we found ourselves close to Dowar Eshutt.

"'The Morockeen soon after joined us, giving utterance to the greatest rage and fury as soon as he could make himself audible, and, were it not that we were four to one, I verily believe he would have perpetrated the crime of murder that very night. "The work," he said, "was on the eve of being completed, and the stones opened the gap for us to possess ourselves of vast treasures. Your cowardice has frustrated all. You might have been wealthy by this time; but beggars you were when you came here, and, through your own folly, beggars you return."'

"We have given, as nearly as possible, in Elgaabsi's own words, a recital of an adventure, or rather a

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strange enterprise, in which he was one of the actors. He vouches for the truth of every word, and those who know him have great confidence in his veracity. We abstain from comments."

There are several haunted houses in the native and Jewish quarters, which, I am told, the Arabs scrupulously avoid after dark. It is an old belief among the Jews that the spirits of the dead "whispered in a feeble and peculiar way out of the dust." They believed that the soul could not rest unless the body were interred, and this gave rise to many a thrilling ghost-story.

Serpents are regarded with awe. If a serpent chooses to take up his abode in an Arab house, it is looked upon as an honour, and he is appeased by offerings of milk. A marabout is supposed to be capable of taking up all manner of poisonous reptiles without harm.

Old-world beliefs die hard in Tunis. Only the other day, when the eclipse of the sun took place, the Arabs of Tunis flew terrified into the mosques, and the women beat pans and uttered cries in order to exorcise the spirits of darkness; and till quite recently there flourished in Tunis an alchemist who claimed to have the secret of transmuting metals. In cases of illness the humbler Arabs, especially their women, will first have recourse to spells rather than doctors.

If they are barren, Arab women make a pilgrim-

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age to the tomb of Sidi Fatallah, outside Tunis, and slide down the slope of the hill where her marabout or shrine has been erected. The women are more punctilious than the men in superstitious and pious observances. At the weddings it is they who see that the empty egg-shell and the pimento are suspended over the door of the newly married couple; that the wedding-candles are formed into a rude hand of Fatma; and that that same hand is imprinted in fresh blood on the wall. It is they who use the time-honoured recipe of the sound of a violin and the feathers and blood of a fowl in order to exorcise those who are possessed of evil spirits. It is they who teach their children the formulas to avert misfortune.

And it is hardly to be wondered at if they fill their lives with these observances. The events of the week are their pilgrimages to various shrines, like that of the saint Lella Manouba on the hill outside the walls, or that of the saint Menara in the Place des Selliers, under the shadow of the spreading sycamore-tree which guards her little white tomb. In the thick masonry of the Gate, the Bab-Menara, is a hole where she lived, and henna-stained hands reach timidly in to put offerings through the aperture which served her as a window.

What did this saint Menara love with such devotion, one wonders? The Arab women have no Heavenly Bridegroom, for whose sake to mortify

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their tender flesh and burn with fever at night; no gracious Madonna, with eyes of pain and compassion. Mahomet can inspire no mystical love, like Christ. What romance of religion, then, can this frail woman-saint have woven out of her solitude, living in the gate through which the great world passed to its daily business? Now, beggars sit all the day long in its shadow—old Negro women, inhuman in their ugliness and rags, begging alms of the rich and the pious as they go into the souks, or of the gay French officer as he strides past on his way to catch the electric tram. He knows nothing of the saint whose humble white tomb greets him as he stares into the saddle-makers' booths, and whose poor little mosque is almost lost in its poverty and insignificance.

The Arab is a fatalist; but Fate to him often assumes the malignance of the Até of Greek tragedy. It is always waiting to find him tripping, and to heap misfortune on his head. When it comes he is resigned. It is the will of Allah. But meanwhile he takes every precaution. He never mentions a project without inserting a pious "Inshallah" ("If it be the will of God"). He watches the omens and the stars. Games of chance fascinate him with deadly fascination. He is always passive, some say. Yes, he is passive before the present; but to meet the future he is fighting a minute warfare, and the citadel in which he entrenches himself is the Black Religion—superstition.

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CHAPTER XIX

BEDOUINS

By E. M. Stevens

THE Bedouin of Tunis is very like the gypsy of England. He is a constant wanderer, a friend of the wind and the stars, sleeping nightly with nothing but a coarse camel's-hair cloth between himself, and the limitless African sky. He wanders, like his father Ishmael, into the places where water is not, and where there is an horizon-line like the horizon of mid-ocean, unbroken at all four points of the compass. He is tanned to the colour of the sun-baked earth; he has become as tough as a palm-tree by many wanderings, and lean because he is accustomed to scant fare. When he is on his camel he looks like an integral part of that supercilious beast; man and animal together form a kind of sphinx. His bronzed, serious face, beneath the hood of his burnous, is as inscrutable as eternity; perhaps because the centuries have so little effect on his dress or his way of life, or his way of thinking.

His very name will tell you what a gypsy he is.

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"Bedouin" is a corruption of the Arab word *badwi*, derived from the substantive *badu*, "open country"; therefore, Bedouin means one who lives in the open country—an "open-country-dweller." And in the days of Scipio Africanus they were called the "Scenites," the tent-dwellers.

The best time to see him and his wives in Tunis is at sowing time and reaping time, October and May, for in those months encampments of Bedouins come citywards to help to cut and garner the corn. But any day, just outside Tunis—at the Bardo, for example—you can see a group of dirty-looking tents, for all the world like the tents of the Boswells, the Hearns, or the Lees, in the New Forest or Epping Forest; or a rough hut or *gourbi*, a kind of four-posted arrangement roughly thatched with grass, sheltering Ishmael and his family. Or, if you go to Carthage, there is a Bedouin village at La Malga whose inhabitants take up their abode in the ancient cisterns, just as Sicilians commandeer tombs.

You need not fear any objection on the part of the wanderers if you indulge your curiosity. Round the tents will be camels, closely hobbled, whose shabby, dusty hides look as if they would be the better for a little grooming. They lift their heads to look at you with much the same air as a woman lifts her lorgnettes to snub an impertinent stranger. You had better not touch them,—camels hate being

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touched by any one but their masters, and at certain seasons of the year they will bite—only with their lips, but their lips can leave a good-sized bruise. The ship of the desert has no graces to speak of; he is only good as a note in a landscape, like a church spire in the conventional paintings of the "eighties."

Beside the camels there are a few donkeys, also dusty, also hobbled, and usually with raw or sore backs. This is not because the Bedouin is deliberately cruel to his beasts, but because he is a happy-go-lucky creature who takes little thought for the morrow; and it does not occur to him to couple his animal's sores and his own neglect. He regards them as a chastisement sent to the donkey from Allah.

The watchdog will probably run out first to meet you, if he is not tied up; although unclean, according to the Koran, he is a splendid protector and guard, and at night watches over the tents and baggage jealously. As soon as your interest has become obvious, the human part of the encampment swarm round you—the women first, their lord and master sauntering after, lending countenance to them by his presence and gracious approval. If they happen to be a real nomad family it is not too often that they come to towns where the Roumi lives, more particularly Roumi ladies, and they regard you with as

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much interest as you bestow on them, smiling to show their goodwill, and glowing with glorious hopes of backshish. Bedouin women are as insatiable for copper coins as children are for sweets; they will break any law of the Prophet cheerfully for a sou. They will allow you to take their photographs at the risk of eternal torment for two sous. They will even sell their amulets, and incur misfortune; they would sell their babies if they were not so fond of them. A Bedouin mother is as tender as any mother in the world—her husband has many wives, but her baby can have only one mother, and she lavishes all her heart on it.

What a crowd they made, these tent-dwellers! There were brown, unveiled women of every age, from the old shrivelled grandmother, whose face was like a chimpanzee's with its furrows and wrinkles and tan, to the pretty smiling creature whom I suspected of being the chief's youngest and favourite wife. Three of the others were his wives, too. The eldest, though only twenty-five, looked forty as we reckon. Child-bearing and hard work had aged her before her time. Her eyes were melancholy; her expression was heavy and good-natured. She was suckling a brown baby undismayed by the appearance of foreigners—a delicious morsel with great solemn eyes, swathes of clothing, and a big bunch of cowries and buttons and bright blue beads around his plump

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Photo by Garrigues, Tunis.

YOUNG BEDOUIN WIVES.

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neck, and a dirty, voluminous turban round his bald head.

There were one or two pretty little girls, too —tousle-headed, bright-eyed as dormice, and alive as young gazelles, clutching at their elders' skirts. We noticed that their nails were stained brick-red with henna. And there was a fat, small boy who wore scarcely more than the fig-leaf of Eden and a necklace and a duster; and an elder brother, a thin, good-looking lad of thirteen enveloped in a tattered burnous.

All the women were loaded with jewellery. Their chains of amulets and the rough fibulæ which kept their garment together at the shoulders were not by any means all that they possessed in the way of ornament. On their arms were bracelets of silver, white metal, and beads stitched on to leather; and in their ears were huge hoop earrings partly supported by strings or chains tied to their head-dress. A hood or shawl of cotton was over their heads, and wound round and round over that was a piece of cloth. Plaits were draped round the youngest wife's ears, and brought through this tight turban, swathed round the forehead like a coronet; but from the eldest wife's head kerchief wisps of a heavy black fringe escaped.

All the women bore a three-pronged tattoo-mark on their forehead, whether tribal or religious I do not

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know. The youngest wife could not have been more than fifteen, though she looked twenty and was plump and well-favoured; probably she had done little work as yet—her hard time was coming. The chief himself was a gaunt, tanned, bearded man in a well-worn burnous; his brown legs were thin and bare as a stork's; he was lean as a Dervish. He smiled benignly at us: he was evidently proud of his possessions.

A Bedouin marries for a very good reason. He wants a servant. When he is choosing her he considers her qualifications from this point. Beauty is a luxury. It is only when he is well provided with working wives that he can afford to indulge in it. The richer he is, the more wives he possesses. He himself is a magnificent person, who does as little work as possible. If he is a shepherd, it is true he tends the flocks—not an arduous task; but his wife does the really hard work. At harvest-time the nomad Bedouin condescends to manual labour, but at other seasons he is content to give orders and see that his wife obeys them. It is his wife who weaves the camel's-hair cloth, and makes his clothes, and grinds his corn, and carries his water, and cooks his meals, and even builds his house—if a tent or a *gourbi* may be called by that name.

When a poor Bedouin wishes to "flit," as they say in Scotland—migrate with his tent and herds to

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another piece of pasture ground, he sits down, and sings or sleeps in the shade while his wife folds the tent-cloth, removes the stakes, loads his ass with the whole of this moving tent, adding to the load her mill, her grain-jars, and her wooden plates. Then she drives the ass towards their destination. When they have arrived, she drives in the pegs, stretches the tent with stones, deposits the mill, jars, and plates, spreads matting on the ground, plants a thin rampart of thorns around her tent, and the house is reconstructed again. When her husband grows rich enough to take unto himself a second, a third, and a fourth wife, she welcomes them gladly—they lighten the burden of her many tasks, and the stern realities of her daily life have long ago killed romance in her. What little she has left is centred in her babies, to whom she croons the old, old Bedouin songs, which are almost as old as maternity itself.

One compensation the Bedouin woman has—her figure to the end is better than that of her secluded and much-veiled town sister. The Bedouin girls are slender, lithe young things, often remarkable for their beauty. When we were at Carthage, our guide, a handsome young Arab of nineteen, named Mohammed Ben Ali Habib, confided to me at the end of one day that he was in love with a beautiful Bedouin girl who lived a stone's throw from the Cimetières des Officiales. He spoke of her with the profound

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melancholy of a poet. She was the loveliest girl in all Tunisia, he said. But his love-making could only be carried on under difficulties, for she was guarded by two brothers, who kept the door—she was a house-dweller—locked against her lovers, and only opened it when they were present to chaperon her.

Mohammed sighed. We were sitting at the time by the august tombs of the Cimetières des Officiales, in view of her house.

"Ah, mademoiselle, elle est belle, belle, belle! C'est la Bédouine la plus chic de tout Tunis. Comme elle est chic!"

"But you are prosperous, you are a good guide, Mohammed," I said. "Why don't you marry her?"

"No, mademoiselle, I shall *marry* an Arab. But she, too, must be beautiful. I should like my wife to be able to walk well, as I can. Then I shall take her down to bathe in the evening, as the Arab ladies do who come from Tunis in the hot weather. She must also be very young. There is a girl in Sidi-bou-Said who is a cousin of mine, and our people wish her to marry me. She is very much in love with me—she desires me very much. But she is fat, a veritable pig. I will have none of her. I wish my wife to be slim, but not too thin, and active."

Most of the Bedouins who camp round Tunis are of the Swassi tribe, and have high cheekbones,

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wide, well-formed mouths, and intelligent foreheads. Unlike the Tunis Arabs, they are no cleaner than they should be. Washing under the condition in which they live is attended with difficulty. To begin with, water is regarded rather as a drinking than a washing liquid, and the clothes he has on are usually the only ones a poor Bedouin possesses. He wears them until they wear off or into him. But though dirty, he is never squalid—he belongs to Nature's great unwashed, like the beasts of the fields and the fowls of the air.

He lives simply. His food is mostly a plain kous-kouss, dressed by his wife ; his drink is mostly of water, varied by palm-wine or lagmi. Dates and figs are also great items in his daily menus. He eats astonishingly little, like his camel. His wife boils her kettle over a fire fed with cakes of camel's dung, and suspends it from a tripod—just as English gypsies are supposed to do, though they never use tripods except upon the operatic stage.

Her utensils and furniture and implements are few and very simple. The stone mill with which she grinds the corn is of the same shape as that of biblical days ; her loom is of an immemorial pattern. When she goes out to work in the harvest fields with her husband, they cut the corn by passing the sickle over the ears and leaving the blades standing, as they have done for a thousand years. If a Bedouin

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ploughs, his plough is of the same pattern that the farmer Boaz used in the days of the alien Ruth.

The Bedouin is not very religious, although he is superstitious, for he harbours that unclean animal the dog, and is not regular in either his prayers or his ablutions. His women, too, go unveiled, unless he wishes to act the city gentleman, when he will sometimes compel them to veil themselves like the fine city dames. But somehow, when one sees him stalking lithely through the bazars, a sun-stained child of nature, past the plump merchantmen lolling in their scented booths in silks and fine linen, as pale as women and as indolent as cats, he appears a very man, and a worthy creation of God. He carries with him something of the free breath of heaven, something of the vastness of the desert, something of eternity.[1]

[1] In this context it is interesting to quote the description of the Arabs given by Diodorus Siculus, who was almost a contemporary of our Lord: "It is worth our pains here to relate the manners and customs of these Arabians, for the information of those that are ignorant, by the use of which customs they have hitherto secured themselves and preserved their liberty. They live in the plain and open fields, calling that desert a country, wherein are neither inhabitants, rivers, nor springs, whereby any enemy's army can be relieved. It is a law amongst them neither to sow, plant, build houses, nor drink any wine; and he that is discovered to do any of these is sure to die for it. And the reason of this law is, because they conceive that those who are possessed of such things are easily (for fear of losing what they have, or in hopes of gaining more) forced to comply with the will and humour of those that are more powerful. Some of these breed up camels; others employ themselves in feeding sheep,

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roving to and fro in the wilderness for that purpose. There are no few, indeed, of the Arabians, that, though they give themselves to the pasturage of cattle in the desert, yet are richer far than the rest; but exceed not in number above ten thousand. For many of them use to carry frankincense, myrrh, and other rich perfumes down to the seaside, which they traffic for, and receive from those who bring them from Arabia the Happy. They highly prize and value their liberty, and when any strong armies invade them, they presently fly into the wilderness, as to a strong fort and castle, for refuge; for no water being there to be had, none can follow them through these deserts. But as to themselves, they have a sure and safe retreat by the help of earthen pots and vessels hid in the ground prepared beforehand. For the soil is a fat clay, under which lies a soft stone, in which they dig great caves, very narrow at the entrance, but enlarging by degrees as they increase in depth, till they come at length to that bigness as to be a hundred feet square. These caves they fill up to the mouth with these vessels filled with rain-water; then they lay all even with the rest of the ground and leave certain marks where to find the place, known to none but themselves. For the cattle (driven away along with them) take so much water as may serve them for three days, lest, while they are in their flight in dry and parched places, they should ever be put to a stop by the continual watering of their cattle. Their food is flesh, milk, and roots. For drink, having abundance of wild honey and a sort of pepper, they mix them together for that purpose."

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CHAPTER XX

A TUNISIAN HAREM AND THE TOMBS OF THE BEYS

By E. M. Stevens

IT is a matter of common knowledge that the harems of Tunis are fading under the judicious French rule. But I induced a lady friend to go and see what there is to be seen. She wrote:

Our one experience of harems was not a happy one. A Jewish Whiteley in the bazar (whose universal enterprise was proved by his employing a Mahometan saint as a tout) asked us one day if we should care to see the harem of one of the Bey's ministers. He knew, he said, a French lady who would be pleased to take us to one. There was no talk of payment; but we had heard vague tales that magnificent presents were expected by the inquisitive but childish little women, who were immured in splendid luxury by their lords and masters. So we hesitated. The Jew waxed insistent.

"A magnificent harem, mesdames!"

"But is it not necessary to take presents?"

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"No, no; only a trifle to the children."

We yielded to the oily tongue of the Hebrew. In a few minutes, the interval being occupied by his ransacking his shop for temptations irresistible to us, and in eloquent entreaties that we should buy them at three times their proper value, a respectably-dressed Frenchwoman of the middle class came and took possession of us. Her manner was rather condescending, and we followed her meekly out of the shop and down the sunny little whitewashed street, with high walls, that led out of the souks. She was a friend of the minister's three wives, she informed us, and one, as we should see, was very beautiful and quite young.

Visions of a slender Lalla Rookh, attired in the marvellous embroideries and jewellery of the Orient, rose before us. Presently we knocked at a nail-studded door in the wall, which was pulled a crack's breadth open. After a query and answer in Arabic through the grudging chink, the door was opened, and, passing by a kind of ante-room on our right, we stepped into the *patio*. It was not unlike the courtyard of a Sicilian palace; it had a cool colonnade, and two stories. There were a number of slatternly-looking women in it, and one or two children. They were mostly engaged in washing in one of the rooms which led off the *patio*, but they left their work to come and stare at us, and ask our cicerone a host of questions.

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We did all we could under the circumstances—smiled politely, and patted the children, imagining that these were the minister's servants, though we thought it a little curious that one strapping young woman should be particularly introduced to us. She was a great, smiling, buxom, scarlet-cheeked creature of eighteen, with figure enough for a woman of thirty, and black eyes as big as half-crown pieces, fringed by heavy black lashes. Her bare arms were an enormous size. She wore full trousers and a tunic and some jewellery; her feet were thrust into shabby, heel-less slippers. There was nothing to suggest that her social position was one whit above the rest.

"We will go upstairs," our cicerone said, and we followed her up the upholstered staircase which led to the women's apartments. A stuffed puma crouched at the top of the staircase, which led into a small reception-hall, opening into the women's apartments. It looked luxurious enough, and the slatternly disorder of the *patio* was not observable here; but we could not quite share in our cicerone's enthusiasm as she pointed out this or the other piece of inlaid mother-of-pearl, this bit of furniture, those hangings, that china. The ceilings, which were carved, painted, and gilt, were rich in effect, and, generally speaking, what was Arab was good and beautiful, but what was European was cheap and nasty.

Luxury there was to a certain extent; comfort,

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Photo by Garrigues, Tunis.

A RICH ARAB'S BEDROOM.

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none. The whole place reminded you of a Liberty's show-room. We peeped into the empty bedrooms with their much-curtained and couch-like beds, their mother-of-pearl chests and their cushioned divans, and into a room upon which a table was laid with decanters, glasses, and so on, in European fashion, ready for the minister and his brother, who was, it appeared, an Arab lawyer.

Still the wives did not appear.

"Where are the wives?" we inquired.

"Ah, it is the Feast of the Birthday of the Prophet this week, and they are busy preparing. They will be here in a moment."

We waited patiently, and presently in came two young women, no better dressed than the girl who had met us in the courtyard, who came towards us with smiles. These were introduced as the wives. One was frankly ugly, the other was pretty in a sallow way; her two big black eyes burned in her head, and a trilby fringe was combed over her low forehead. There was a rather pretty, small boy with them, who stared at us with all his eyes. He was much better dressed than either of the two women, in an embroidered jacket and bright blue trousers.

It was rather an awkward moment. Our so-called hostesses knew no French, and we knew no Arabic except the greeting "Beslemma." However,

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Madame was willing to interpret, and we plunged desperately into the inquiry as to which of the minister's spouses was the mother of the child. The better-looking of the two owned to being its mother. More smiles, more pauses. We then praised the house, and this loosed the tongues of our hostesses.

We were subjected to quite a Shorter Catechism, —Where did we come from? What relation were we to each other? Why were we not married? How old were we? and so on. Even our persons were subjected to minute scrutiny. Some ornaments that Miss L—— wore, particularly a small Negro's head with ruby eyes which she had attached to her bracelet as a charm, were much admired, and so was a white embroidered blouse which I was wearing, which they fingered and thoroughly examined. It was becoming embarrassing, and I resolved to turn the conversation into other channels. Remembering what I had been told of Arab compliments, I made up my mind to become as boldly personal as they had been, and turned to Madame.

"Please tell them how very beautiful we think their eyes," I said.

Madame translated, and they replied.

"They say that the eyes of mademoiselle are just as beautiful."

"My eyes are small," I said humbly, rising to

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the occasion. "They are not comparable in loveliness to theirs."

Again our cicerone translated.

"They say that the eyes of mademoiselle make up what they lack in size by their sympathy and brilliance."

This battledore-and-shuttlecock game of compliments might have gone on indefinitely, but we remembered that our men-folk were waiting. We had seen all that we wished, and had no desire to keep the ladies from their washing and cooking. So we bade them goodbye, and, as we passed downstairs, were shown the small, neat, bare room, covered with cool-looking matting, in which the "brother of the minister" studied the law of Islam. Then we made our adieux in the court. We were well examined all over before we said our final goodbye, and slipped a franc or two into the fist of the small, pallid boy, who stood clutching at his mother's trousers. Then we followed Madame up the sunny street again.

"Which was the beauty?" Miss L—— asked; and we learnt that it was the over-buxom, red-cheeked damsel whom we had taken for a servant! So much for our dreams of Lalla Rookh!

The delicate question of what should be given to Madame herself arose next. We dared not offer this important person, in her black mantle and osprey-

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feathered red bonnet, any pecuniary reward ourselves; indeed, we almost decided that she would be insulted by the mere mention of payment. But when we reached the Jew's shop again, we were undeceived. There was an expectant air about her, in spite of her disdain, and the merchant whispered that three or four francs would be a sufficient "compliment."

We followed his advice, and she went off as dourly as she came, while we were left to digest our experiences. Perhaps our first impression was correct. It is possible that the good lady who conducted us had an understanding with the servants of the household, so that they received foreigners and were introduced as wives. But, on the other hand, there was the fact that the real wives could not have been stowed away anywhere, and the bedrooms and reception-rooms were empty, except for the women that we saw. *Qu'à penser ?*

The tombs of the Beys are guarded by women; only women are permitted to visit them, and that rarely. We esteemed ourselves in luck's way when an Arab whom we had met in the souks, who was friendly with the custodians, said that he could procure admission to the tombs for all of us who were not of the forbidden sex. In Sicily women are accustomed to finding themselves excluded, for the best cloisters often belong to holy men, who regard the footstep of a daughter of Eve as profanation. Men enter

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where the angelic sex fear to tread. But in Tunis the position is reversed—men may not look on women unveiled, nor penetrate the harems, nor set foot in the tombs of the Beys. When we learnt that we were once more to enter on the mere passport of our sex, we cast a triumphant glance at the men of our party and agreed. The domes of the building are scaled with green tiles; its walls are washed white; the sun beats down on it mercilessly—at noonday there is not an inch of cool blue shadow.

Our Arab, a black-coated person in a chéchia, who prided himself on his Parisian ideas, knocked loudly at the heavily-studded door; it was some while before we heard a stir and whispering within. There was a long parley in Arabic through a chink, which at last widened sufficiently to admit us, and we found ourselves inside. Our sponsor could not enter, being a man; and the two tomb-women could not speak a word of anything but Arabic. Our conversation with signs was limited. They were plain, elderly, slatternly-looking women in loose jackets and full trousers; their bare feet were thrust into clogs, and they wore handkerchiefs tied in a sort of turban round their heads. They took us first through a magnificent colonnaded courtyard built of the black and white masonry so dear to the Arab, tiled and stuccoed like the Bey's palace at the Bardo. We crossed it, and entered a hall or room in which were

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a number of white tombs side by side like beds in a dormitory, bearing inscriptions in Arabic, and surmounted by turbaned stumps like the graves in the Arab cemetery outside the town.

The effect of coming from the brightness and whiteness of the court into the subdued prismatic twilight of these rooms (for the *mashrabeyah* windows were filled with coloured glass), was for the moment almost blinding. We stood for a little in silence: we felt as if we were treading holy ground. But the presence of the dead did not appear to weigh heavily on our two guides. They chattered like magpies, and were evidently discussing us from every standpoint; they laughed as if the whole thing was amusing. The spaces between the tombs was covered with fine Arab matting; the ceilings were stuccoed as elaborately as the ceilings of the Dar-el-Bey. In all there were three or four rooms—one was reserved for the Beys; another for the wives of the Beys, and eunuchs; another for princes of Royal blood; and so on. In each it was the same,—matting, stained windows, and rows of white tombs; silence, and splendour, and simplicity.

Presently the women led us upstairs into their own apartments. They made signs to us to go quietly; and, when we had reached the top, with mischievous smiles and fingers laid on their lips they noiselessly opened a door. We followed on tiptoe,

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and looked over their shoulders. In a sunny, bare little room whose floor was covered with matting, an old man sat with his back to us, poring over a manuscript. He did not turn round to look at us—he was too absorbed to notice our presence. They closed the door again, and we crept downstairs, crossed the courtyard, said a final "Beslemma" to the tomb-women, dropped some francs into their too-willing palms, and went out through the big door into the workaday world.

Strangely enough, the picture that remained uppermost in my mind as we went up into the busy market was not of the white tombs of the dead rulers and their consorts and concubines, whose beauties, ambitions, and heart-burnings lay in dust beneath the smooth marble; not of the rainbow colours thrown upon them by the exquisite windows: but of the patient old man who sat in the sunny upper room, deep in his scroll and oblivious of our intrusion and his giggling women-folk.

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SPORT AND TRAVEL IN TUNISIA

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Photo by J. I. S. Whitaker.

THE TUNISIAN SAHARA.

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CHAPTER XXI

SPORT AND CAMP-LIFE IN TUNISIA

By J. I. S. Whitaker, F.Z.S., M.B.O.U.

Introductory Note

FROM a scientific point of view the most important book written by an Englishman about the Regency of Tunis is *The Birds of Tunisia*, a history of the birds found in the Regency of Tunis, by J. I. S. Whitaker, F.Z.S., M.B.O.U., etc.; published by Mr. R. H. Porter, of Princes Street, Cavendish Square.

Mr. Whitaker has in the gardens of Malfitano, the finest villa in Sicily, a natural history museum devoted chiefly to the birds of North Africa, with which all scientific visitors to Palermo are familiar, because its collection of Tunisian birds is unequalled anywhere. Mr. Whitaker, who is a well-known contributor to *The Ibis*, our principal ornithological journal, and a fellow of the Royal Zoological Society, has produced his work in the most sumptuous form, which makes it worthy in the matter of illustration,

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as well as for its letterpress, to find a place in the libraries of clubs and country gentlemen by the side of standard ornithological works.

This book is not the place to criticise the scientific arrangement of the three hundred and sixty-five specimens of the Tunisian Avifauna, or the exhaustive accounts of their habits and habitats; but I should have been compelled to draw a great deal on the admirable introduction if Mr. Whitaker had not yielded to my request that he should write me for this book the accompanying chapter on sport in Tunisia, which treats the matter with a fulness not hitherto achieved in any English book on the subject, and which I know will be to many readers the most interesting feature in my book.

There is a large class of country gentlemen who, being compelled by the rigour of our climate to give up the sports to which they are so devoted in this country, seek to replace them by sport in more genial climates. Sport in Tunisia is neither expensive nor dangerous. No one is likely to see the larger carnivora; no one who keeps within the French outposts will be molested by the Arabs. Tunisia is a country in which ladies, if they are moderately hardy, can accompany the men on sporting expeditions into the interior, as the plucky Englishwoman so very often desires to do. It has the further advantage of having places like Tunis, where the ladies who do

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not wish to undergo the hardships of camping out can enjoy themselves thoroughly without the slightest fear of annoyance while their husbands are away shooting.

Mr. Whitaker's chapter could not have been better written from the point of view of the above. He is a thorough sportsman, as well as a naturalist, and having often travelled in the interior of Tunisia, speaks with a perfect knowledge of the country. Added to this, he writes in a pleasant, straightforward way, as lucidly as a practical guide, as naturally as if he were giving you the information verbally. I have read the official guide-book written in French on the subject, and can say from experience that he leaves no point of importance untouched.

In the introduction to his book he begins as befits with the birds, and then passes to a succinct description of the four regions into which Tunisia is naturally divided: the northern region, lying north of the Atlas Mountains; the central, lying between them and a line drawn from Midès, on the Algerian frontier, to Skirra, between Sfax and Gabès; the semi-desert region, lying south of this; and the desert region, south of the Chotts or great salt lakes. From this description the sportsman can gather the nature of the district he means to go to as distinctly as if he read a whole book on Tunisia. Mr. Whitaker is a master of terse, suggestive descriptions.

After this he returns to a survey of the Avifauna

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of the Regency, adding a few words on the other attractions, such as the extensive Roman and Punic ruins, of which a few illustrations are given.

Although Tunisia at the present day is no longer the savage, uncivilised country of former times, teeming with wild beasts and still wilder human marauders, it is yet fairly primitive, and, so far as regards its "hinterland," sufficiently off the beaten track of the ordinary tourist to prove attractive to those who may care to roam farther afield in search of novelty, and, in the case of the sportsman, of wild sport.

It cannot, it is true, now be called a great game country, or one worth visiting solely for the purpose of sport; but a certain amount of rough shooting may still be had in the more mountainous and wooded parts of the "Tell" and central districts, as well as on the vast plains farther south. The shooting obtainable, moreover, is sufficiently varied, and of a description to satisfy all but the *greedy* "shot," accustomed to "big bags," secured with a minimum of trouble, although probably a maximum of expenditure.

The keen and true sportsman, to whom the great charm and essence of sport lies, not in the slaughter of game, but in its search and pursuit, will still find enough to repay him for his pains in some parts

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of the interior of the country. To him, and those like him, who are willing to work for their game, unaided by trained keepers and beaters, and prepared to put up with the petty discomforts and "roughing" inseparable from travel in a little-known and semi-civilised land, Tunisia specially commends itself.

As a country for caravan-travel and camp-life the Regency is perhaps unrivalled; its climate throughout a considerable portion of the year being all that could be desired, and its safety and freedom from hostile or fanatical natives absolute, provided the French military outposts in the south be not overstepped. Its accessibility and its roads, save in some few districts, are excellent, while means of transport are easily obtainable; and hospitality, both on the part of the French authorities, military and civil, and on that of the native inhabitants, is proverbial and unfailing.

To add to the pleasure and interest of such travel, the varied aspect and scenery of the Regency contribute largely,—richly wooded mountains and valleys, with fertile plains, lakes, and rivers, being characteristic of the more northern districts; lower hills and picturesque, undulating, parklike country predominating in the central region; while southward extend vast semi-desert plains, the monotony of which is broken from time to time by glistening white salt-marshes, the so-called "Chotts," or "Sebkas," and luxuriant

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and beautiful oases, the gems of the desert, standing forth like emeralds in the golden Saharan landscape.

Although outside the scope of the present chapter to touch on so important a subject as archæology, I cannot refrain from observing that, should the traveller happen to have a leaning that way, he will find an abundant and unfailing source of interest in the many remains of important and magnificent monuments which are to be found throughout the entire length and breadth of the Regency—traces of prehistoric, Phœnician, Punic, and particularly of Roman occupation being numerous, and attesting to the former greatness of the country.

My own experiences in the way of travel and sport in Tunisia have been of so pleasing a nature that I can heartily recommend a shooting trip in the Regency to any one, fond of natural history and sport, who may wish to enjoy a few weeks of relaxation out of the beaten track, yet not too far from home and civilisation.

My earliest reminiscences of shooting in the Regency date from over a quarter of a century ago, and prior to the institution and imposition of French rule in 1881. At that period the greater part of the country was little known to Europeans, and I recollect a short trip I made inland, within twenty or thirty miles of the town of Tunis, causing great excitement among the inhabitants of the district.

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Photo by J. I. S. Whitaker.

MR. J. I. S. WHITAKER'S CARAVAN.

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In those days game was no doubt more plentiful than it is at present, and one must now go farther afield in order to obtain good sport.

Since Tunisia has been under French protection, and European civilisation, with the "iron horse" as its pioneer and chief auxiliary, has penetrated the savage wilds and fastnesses of many previously all-but-unknown inland districts, a change has been wrought to the detriment of the sportsman and naturalist, though doubtless to the advantage and personal comfort of the ordinary traveller.

The wild fauna of the country, particularly its larger *Carnivora* and *Raptores*, has been most affected by the inroads of civilisation, and the sportsman to-day must not expect to hear lions roaring at night; or to come face to face with one of these animals, as did an old friend of mine several years ago, not far from Tebessa in the Eastern Atlas; or even to meet with the fresh footprints of a lion, as I myself did not more than fifteen years ago in the forest of Ghardimaou. He may, it is true, still come across a panther, of which there are a few left in the country; but the chances of his doing so are remote, and he had better turn his attention to other game, such as the Barbary wild sheep (*Ovis tragelaphus*), the "Edmi" (*Gazella cuvieri*), and wild boar, of which, as well as of feathered game, there is no lack in the hilly districts of the Atlas. The common Dorcas

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gazelle is abundant on the plains south of the Atlas, and still farther south, in the true desert, may be found the pale Loder's gazelle (*G. leptoceros*) and the Addax antelope (*Addax naso-maculatus*).

The two species of most interest to the sportsman to be met with in the more accessible parts of the Regency are undoubtedly the Barbary wild sheep, the "Mouflon à manchettes" of the French, and "Aoudad" (pronounced "Udad") or "l'Arrowi" of the Arabs; and the "Edmi," or mountain gazelle, called "l'Edem" by the Tunisians. Both are fine beasts and well worth taking some trouble to secure. They frequent the same description of country, and are to be found on the same mountain ranges. The Atlas is, no doubt, their principal stronghold, but both species are to be met with on some of the mountains farther south, and at varying elevations. The Tunisian, or Eastern Atlas, I may here observe, is somewhat broken up, and does not run in one continuous range, or attain the same altitude that it does farther west.

An excellent account of the stalking of the Barbary wild sheep and the "Edmi" in the Aurès Mountains of Algeria, has been given by Mr. E. N. Buxton in "*Short Stalks*"; while papers regarding both species, by Sir Edmund Loder, Mr. A. E. Pease, and myself, have been published at different times in the *Proceedings* of the Zoological Society of London.

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The Djebel Selloum, near Kasrin, in Central Tunisia, is perhaps one of the best mountains for Mouflon and "Edmi"; but both species roam a great deal, and if much disturbed, forsake a favourite locality for a while and take up their quarters elsewhere. At certain seasons the Arabs are in the habit of taking their herds of camels up into the mountains for grazing, visiting one range after another in turn; and when thus over-run, even the best locality is, for the time being, deserted by both wild sheep and gazelles. I have more than once experienced bitter disappointment on this account, and after a hard climb up a steep mountain, been greeted by the unexpected and unwelcome sight of the "ships of the desert" tranquilly and unconcernedly browsing over some ideal game ground. Never did these patient and long-suffering animals appear to me more unprepossessing and utterly "out of place" than on these occasions.

The Djebel Orbata, near Gafsa, and the ranges of mountains farther west, on the borders of the Algerio-Tunisian frontier, are said to afford good sport, and both Mouflon and "Edmi" are undoubtedly to be found in certain abundance on some of them, though personally I have had no luck with either species in any of these districts. Stalking on these arid southern mountains, abounding in jagged rocks and loose stones, is rough work and considerably harder than on the wooded hills farther north; but, on the other hand,

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"spying" is easier owing to the lack of cover, though the colour of the Mouflon's coat so closely resembles that of the surrounding rocks, that it is not always an easy matter to make out the animals, especially should they be lying down.

When meeting with the "Edmi" there is no difficulty in distinguishing it from the Dorcas gazelle, as, apart from frequenting mountains and not plains, it is considerably larger in size and darker in colour, and carries straighter and non-lyrate horns. These sometimes attain goodly proportions, and I possess some measuring as much as fourteen and a half inches.

The Dorcas gazelle is to be found throughout the greater part of Central and Southern Tunisia, frequenting the vast semi-desert plains abundant in those districts, but not the more sandy inland country of the xtreme south of the Regency, where it is replaced by nother species, the pale Loder's gazelle (*G. leptoceros*). In winter the Dorcas gazelle congregates in large herds, often numbering over one hundred individuals; but in spring these herds break up, and the species is then to be met with in small parties or singly. When in large herds it is most difficult to approach them, but some of the Arabs are very clever *rabatteurs*, and will drive the gazelles within easy reach of the sportsman, should he have recourse to these means of getting a shot.

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Loder's gazelle, called by the Tunisian Arabs "Ghazel abied" or white gazelle, and by the Algerians "Reem" or "Rhime," is a true desert species, never occurring out of the sand-dune country, where it replaces *G. dorcas*. It is the common gazelle of the Sahara, and is abundant throughout the inland districts of the extreme south of the Regency, being found within twenty-five or thirty miles of the Chott Djerid. It is of about the same size as the Dorcas gazelle, but its coat is much paler in colour and finer in texture, while its horns are altogether different in shape and non-lyrate, resembling more those of the "Edmi," though with a somewhat different curve, and, as a rule, more slender. A fine pair in my collection measures sixteen inches.

Though comparatively few Europeans have obtained specimens of this gazelle, large numbers are killed by the nomad Arabs, who nearly all carry guns, and from five hundred to six hundred pairs of horns are annually brought by the caravans to Gabès, where they find a ready sale among the French soldiery.

The fine Addax antelope (*A. naso-maculatus*) is also to be found in the true sand-desert, but, as a rule, does not range so far north as Loder's gazelle, and has still less often been obtained by Europeans. Herr Spatz of Tunis, however, who used formerly to reside at Gabès, has successfully hunted this species,

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as also Loder's gazelle, and probably knows more about both animals than any other European sportsman.

The Addax, called by the Arabs "Bagaar-el-ouasch" (wild cow), or "Meha," is a handsome beast, with beautifully curved horns. Its summer coat is creamy white, and its winter coat grey, the former in texture much shorter and finer than the latter. A conspicuous tuft of dark hair grows on the forehead, and below this is a peculiar inverted V-shaped white mark, whence the species' scientific name of *nasomaculatus*. I have never penetrated sufficiently far into the desert to meet with this antelope, but have obtained some fine specimens of it, among others a complete skin with horns measuring as much as thirty-eight and a half inches along the curves, the "record" for Addax horns, so far. This specimen was presented by me to the British Museum, and now graces our national collection at South Kensington. A good deal of useful and interesting information regarding both the Addax and Loder's gazelle may be found in Messrs. Sclater & Thomas's fine work, *The Book of Antelopes*, recently published, and in the *Proceedings* of the Zoological Society (*P.Z.S.*, June 5th, 1894, and *P.Z.S.*, November 17th, 1896).

Two other members of the great family of antelopes used, apparently, once to be not uncommon in the extreme south of Tunisia, the Bubale (*B.*

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bubalis) and the Oryx (*O. leucoryx*); but both these animals seem now to be extinct in the Regency.

Turning northwards, we come to another animal which up to a few years ago seemed to be on the verge of extinction, and is still far from common, though, thanks to the provident action on the part of the French authorities, it may yet be found in certain numbers in some of the forests of Northern and Central Tunisia. This is the Barbary deer (*C. elaphus barbarus*), called "Fortassa" by the Arabs, an animal closely resembling our European red-deer, but slightly smaller, and darker in colour, and differing sufficiently perhaps to merit sub-specific distinction. Apparently the forests in the neighbourhood of Ghardimaou and Souk Ahras, and those situated immediately north of Feriana, are the only localities in which this species is to be found now in Tunisia, and, indeed, in which any member of the genus *Cervus* exists at the present day in the entire African continent. Deer are said to have been found in some parts of South Tunisia, but, so far as I am aware, no specimen has been obtained there of late years.

The forests near Ghardimaou and Souk Ahras are chiefly composed of deciduous and evergreen oak (*Quercus mirbeckii* and *Quercus suber*), while those immediately north of Feriana are of Aleppo pine (*P. halpensis*); but the deer seem to thrive equally well in both districts, and under the legal protection

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afforded them, it is sincerely to be hoped that they may continue to flourish. The young fawns are sometimes taken alive, and are occasionally offered for sale by the Arabs in the interior, as are also young Mouflon and "Edmi," to say nothing of young Dorcas gazelles.

Of the larger *Felidæ* few are still to be found in the Regency. The lion is practically extinct, and the panther is every day becoming more scarce, so that it is hardly worth the sportsman's while to devote much time to searching for such animals. The thickly wooded country in the neighbourhood of Ghardimaou and El Fedja used to be one of the chief strongholds of both these creatures in Tunisia; while Jemmapes, the scene of many of Jules Gerard's thrilling adventures and exploits, and the forests of Guelma and Souk Ahras, were their favourite haunts in the province of Constantine. According to official statistics, the number of lions killed in this latter province between the years 1873 and 1884 inclusive was 173, and the number of panthers 704.

Some of the deep valleys and mountain gorges in the district through which the Medjerdah runs are densely clothed with evergreen *maquis* vegetation, all but impenetrable, even to Arabs, and form splendid cover for wild animals. Most beautiful and picturesque are some of these localities, particularly in spring time, when nature is seen at its best.

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Besides an occasional panther, the lynx may still be found in some parts of the Regency, while, of the smaller species, the wild cat, Civet, and Ichneumon are not uncommon. The otter is occasionally met with on the banks of the Medjerdah, and the prettily-marked little zorille is common in some parts of the south.

The hyæna (*H. striata*) is not uncommon in many parts, both north and south of the Atlas; while the jackal (*C. aureus*) is ubiquitous throughout the country.

I once shot one of the latter animals as it was in the act of stalking some gazelles—a case of the "biter, or would-be biter, bit." I happened to be accompanied on that occasion by a sharp-eyed Arab, who prided himself greatly on his prowess as a "shikaree." We were walking together in line over some broken and undulating country, the Arab some distance on my right, when he suddenly stopped and silently beckoned me to approach, pointing eagerly with his finger in front of him. I, of course, promptly obeyed, and on going a little way farther in the direction indicated, and peering over the brow of a sand hillock, spied a fine jackal intently gazing below him, oblivious of any possible danger to himself, least of all from the quarter whence he had probably just approached. To put up my rifle and pot poor Jacky was the work of a moment; but to my surprise and disgust, a few seconds later, I caught sight of a

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small herd of gazelles bounding away and disappearing over the crest of the next hillock before I had time to get a shot.

It appears that the Arab had seen the gazelles feeding in a dip between two sand-hills, but had not noticed the jackal, and he was doubtless already congratulating himself on having secured a fine shot for his temporary master, and consequent "backsheesh" for himself; though I firmly believe that, far greater than his disappointment at the failure of his plans, was his resentment of the idea that I should have imagined for a moment that he was capable of leading me after such inferior game as a jackal!

The man's *amour propre* was evidently wounded, and I doubt his ever having quite forgiven me for the unintentional slight on his reputation; I must confess that he was a wonderful stalker, with the eye of a hawk, the agility of a cat, and the endurance of—an Arab.

The staying powers of the Arabs are certainly marvellous, and most of them are able to travel on foot for days and days together without resting except for the night, and subsisting on nothing more than a handful of dates and a cup of camel's milk during the twenty-four hours.

Foxes are more or less common throughout the country, and in the south of the Regency one may also meet with the pretty little fennec. This diminu-

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tive fox is often kept as a house-pet, and on the occasion of my last visit to Gafsa I was shown a pair destined for one of our Royal princesses.

Last but not least on the list of the larger wild animals to be found in the Regency is the wild boar, abundant throughout all the wooded districts, and affording good sport, though "pig-sticking" is not possible in the densely wooded and broken ground frequented by this species in Tunisia. The neighbourhood of Soliman, and one or two other localities not far distant from the town of Tunis, used to be good ground for "pig," and the Djebel Eshkul, near Bizerta, was, and I believe still is, a favourite haunt of these animals.

I have very lively and pleasant remembrance of a boar-hunt on the Djebel Eshkul, in which I took part several years ago, together with an English friend, who was farming a fine property situated between the above mountain and the small market-town of Mateur.

My friend, who was well known and much respected in the neighbourhood, had got together a picked band of Arabs, comprising all the best "shikarees" of the vicinity—and a fine sporting set of men they were, independent and lawless to an extreme, but keen as mustard on sport.

En passant, I may observe that the tribes of this district were the last to submit to the French

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in 1881, and held out for some time after all the others had given in and the so-called "Kroumir rising" was suppressed.

A good many wild boar, and one or two hyænas were obtained on this occasion, but what interested me more than all was the novel experience of immediate contact with these wild children of nature, and the opportunity afforded me of studying their character and habits. In the evening, after the day's sport was over, and a dinner half-European and half-Arab had been satisfactorily discussed, round the camp-fires in a most picturesque spot at the foot of the mountain, a series of native games and sports commenced, some of them rough enough to satisfy the most boisterous schoolboy. My English friend had fortunately prepared me in some measure for the proceedings, begging me at the same time not to resent any seeming discourtesy on the part of our Arab comrades, so all went well, and we spent a pleasant and amusing evening, parting the following morning the best of friends.

The wild boar, or "Hallouf," as it is called in Arabic, is very destructive to crops, and the natives are always ready to join in hunting it. No "true believer," however, would in former times handle, or even touch, the animals that might be shot, and they used to be left on the ground, to be afterwards carted away by the Maltese labourers, who invariably

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Photo by J. I. S. Whitaker.

ENCAMPMENT AT DJ SIMANIA, CENTRAL TUNISIA.

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followed the hunt expressly for that purpose. I believe the observance of this particular tenet of the Koran is not quite so religiously adhered to nowadays.

Of the rodents, an order of animals particularly well represented in the Regency, I need only allude to the hare (*L. mediterraneus*) as connected with sport. The Tunisian hare differs from the common European species in having longer legs and ears, though it is otherwise somewhat smaller in size. It is abundant in many parts of the Regency, both north and south. The rabbit is not to be found on the Tunisian mainland, though it is said to be abundant on some of the small islands off the coast, whither it was doubtless imported.

In the immediate vicinity of the Djebel Eshkul are some splendid marshes, the haunt of innumerable water-fowl during the winter season and periods of migration. Wild duck of many different species, wild geese, and snipe may be found here in plenty, and excellent shooting is sometimes obtainable. Numerous specimens of marsh-frequenting birds, such as herons and waders of various kinds, are also abundant at times, some of them being resident and remaining in the locality throughout the entire year. Curiously enough, however, the flamingo, which is so common on the lake of Tunis and some other parts of the Regency, is rarely to be seen in this apparent paradise

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for water-birds. The locality certainly is a most fascinating one, not only to birds, nor yet solely to the sportsman, attracted to it by considerations of sport, but to all who love charming scenery and Nature's beauties in general. The panorama presented to the gaze of the traveller coming over the hills from the south is magnificent—the fine lake of Bizerta lying immediately below him, with the town of Bizerta and the blue sea on the right, the Djebel Eshkul rising up before him on the opposite side of the lake, and standing like an island between it and the extensive marshes, bounded by wooded country on the left. I remember sitting down and feasting my eyes for some time on this lovely view, when I first visited that part of the Regency a good many years ago, previous to the opening of the railway from Tunis to Bizerta, and in the days when, in order to visit the latter town, one had to take a journey of several hours along a dusty and uninteresting road.

A herd of semi-domesticated buffaloes roam at will over the marshes and lower slopes of the Djebel Eshkul. These animals belong to the Bey of Tunis, and are more or less protected, although, as "rogues" were not unfrequently to be found among them, I always made a point, when wild-fowl shooting in that locality, of carrying a few ball-cartridges in my pocket, to be prepared for any emergency.

The Barbary partridge, a handsomely plumaged

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bird, though not particularly good for the table, is abundant throughout the Regency, being found wherever there is cover sufficient to shelter it, and water near at hand.

The quail may be met with in vast numbers during the spring migration, and good quail-shooting is often to be had in the immediate vicinity of the town of Tunis.

Woodcock are to be found in certain numbers during the autumn and winter months in most of the wooded districts of the Regency.

The lesser bustard, or "Poule de Carthage," as it is called in Tunis, is plentiful in certain seasons, and is excellent eating, though it does not afford much sport, at any rate for the gun.

Both the lesser and the Houbara bustard, however, are frequently the falconer's quarry in those districts where the "*noble mysterie*" is still practised. Falconry, however, is greatly on the decline in Tunisia, as elsewhere, and is only carried on nowadays by some of the more wealthy Caids and Sheikhs in the Saharan districts. This is no doubt due in great measure to the introduction of breech-loading guns, and the greater facility afforded by them of filling the game-bag with a minimum of time and trouble.

The peregrine and the lanner are the species chiefly employed in Tunisia for hawking, and these falcons used to be once highly prized in consequence,

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and valued by the Arabs as much as their horses and *sloughia*. Curiously enough the *sloughi*, or Arab greyhound, is held in high esteem, contrary to what obtains regarding dogs in general in Mahomedan countries, and the word *kelb*, or dog, is not applied to it.

Besides falcons, many of the larger birds of prey, such as the lammergeier, the griffon and Egyptian vultures, and the golden eagle, are abundant in some parts of the Regency. Sand-grouse of four different species are to be found frequenting the plains of the central and southern districts, and may often be seen in very large numbers.

A gun-licence, which empowers the holder to shoot game, may be obtained in Tunisia for a very trifling sum, and although there is a close time for certain species of game, and the law is observed in the more populated districts of the north, it is difficult to enforce it throughout the greater part of the central and southern regions, where one may travel for days together without meeting human beings, save perhaps a few Bedouins. The importation of loaded cartridges for shooting purposes is not prohibited in Tunis, as it is in Algeria, but custom-house duty has to be paid on them, the amount of which, however, is not exorbitant.

It merely remains for me to make a few general remarks on travel in the interior of the Regency, and

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particularly regarding caravan travel, which is the most convenient, and indeed the only way to visit certain places. The railway has, however, within the last few years, rendered travelling in Tunisia much easier than formerly, and localities even so far south as Gafsa and Metlaoui may be reached by it, without having recourse to a caravan.

Should a lengthened journey be contemplated, it may be well, before leaving Tunis, to obtain from the French Residency a circular letter of recommendation, addressed to the military and civil authorities in the interior. This may be obtained through one's Consul, and is an excellent passport in case of need.

A good interpreter, or dragoman, is necessary, unless the traveller is acquainted with Arabic, and especially in the case of caravan travelling, when, if he be the right sort of man, such an individual will save his employer endless trouble and vexation. An excellent dragoman, rejoicing in the sobriquet of "Bismarck," and well known at the British Consulate in Tunis, is highly to be recommended.

The customary sound advice to travel *lightly* holds good also in Tunisia, though not perhaps of the paramount importance that it is in countries where means of transport are difficult to obtain. Camels may be hired in most parts of the Regency, particularly in the south, at the rate of three francs per beast per day, driver included. Horses and mules can be had in the

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larger towns and villages at the rate of five francs, although this varies somewhat, according to the price ruling for barley. The horses hired out are generally very sorry steeds, but the mules are good as a rule, and more hardy than the former. Very fair horses, however, are to be bought outright at comparatively low prices, and a really good Barb may sometimes be picked up for a very reasonable figure.

The horses are small, as a rule, but very wiry and surefooted, climbing like goats over the steepest hillsides and mountain-passes, and threading their way through the thickest brushwood. European saddles are seldom procurable in the small towns and villages, and the Arab saddle is an abomination. Tents of sorts may be bought or hired in Tunis, but there is nothing to equal a good English double-roofed ridge tent, opening at either end, this being absolutely waterproof in wet weather and cool in hot weather. The temperature, however, in the Regency between November and May is never very high, and during the winter months cold is more to be guarded against, particularly on the high plateaux and mountains.

Water in many parts of the south is scarce, and often undrinkable, either on account of its medicinal properties or because of contamination. It is advisable to carry water-skins or other receptacles, and to lay in a supply of good water when possible.

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Photo by J. I. S. Whitaker.

MR. WHITAKER'S CARAVAN CAMELS.

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Filters are also of service. A supply of tinned provisions and stores will be found useful to fall back on when fresh food is not obtainable. When travelling in the sandy Saharan districts, guns and rifles should be kept in their waterproof covers unless actually in use, as the fine sand is very penetrating and is apt to damage the mechanism of delicately constructed locks and fittings. Fortunately, dust-storms are not of frequent occurrence in winter in the Tunisian Sahara, though they are not absolutely unknown.

I believe an agency was established in Tunis two or three years ago for the purpose of assisting visitors wishing to shoot in the Regency, but I am not sure whether it still exists. In any case, however, it is not difficult to obtain information in Tunis regarding the shooting obtainable, either through one's Consul or through the naturalist Blanc, who has himself accompanied me on some of my shooting expeditions, and knows most of the interior well.

In conclusion, I can only wish others the same pleasure and enjoyment that I have myself experienced in my rambles in Tunisia, and speed them with the valedictory words, common among all good Piedmontese sportsmen, "In bocca al lupo"!

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CHAPTER XXII

A VISIT TO KAIROUAN AND SOUSSA

By Sylvia Von Pernull

IN Kairouan and Soussa I am afraid we were a little disappointed, as the train journey is long and wearisome, the country flat and uninteresting, the only relief to the eye being a few Bedouin encampments scattered here and there.

At Kairouan, which is an essentially Arab town, containing about twenty thousand natives and two hundred and fifty French, there are eighty-five mosques and ninety tombs. The entrance to the Grand Mosque is through an enormous court with three hundred and twenty columns of various periods, not a capital corresponding with its pillar, and more of the Egyptian style than any other.

The court covers a huge cistern and slopes towards the centre, where it ends in one block of marble, the outer four corners of which represent the forefeet of a camel; the sides, the hoofs of a horse; the inner four corners, the hindfeet of a

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camel; and the innersides, the paws of a hunting dog. Over these flows the water into the cistern below.

The wells in this court are formed from the bases of columns, hollowed in the centre. The mosque itself consists of seventeen double aisles parallel with each other, each consisting of eight arcades which rest on magnificent marble columns, surmounted by antique capitals supporting whitewashed arches.

Opposite the main door, and on the side facing Mecca, is a dome composed of exquisitely carved marbles. Underneath it at the right of the Mihrab (a sort of niche whose axis indicates the direction of Mecca) is a pulpit, a magnificent piece of wooden carving. This is said by historians to have been constructed by Abou-Brahim-ben-Mohamed-el-Aghlad, who caused plane-tree wood to be sent from Baghdad for this purpose. This pulpit apart, and its dome and the woodwork which supports it, the Grand Mosque is only remarkable on the whole for its majesty. The courtyard is also surrounded by a portico supported by columns.

The sacristy contains a handsome door of Carthaginian marble. In the sanctuary are sets of three pillars, and a cousin of the Prophet decreed that he should be proved sinless whoever could pass between them. (Bachir laughingly told us that last year he could not

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squeeze through, though he has always managed it before.) From the minaret there is a view over all Kairouan and the surrounding plain.

At some hundred metres from the Tunis Gate are the "Bassins des Aghlabites." Two amongst them have been discovered and repaired at great cost by the "Administration des Ponts et Chaussées." They serve actually to-day as reservoirs for the waters of Cherichera. Of the others the shape alone is perceptible, indicated by the heights of the ground. There has been a long controversy over the original use of these basins, which many pretend were circuses, not seeing their utility in a town which was without water before the springs of Cherichera were captured. It is more than probable, however, that these reservoirs served the same purpose as they do to-day. They should receive the waters of the Oued Merguelli at the time of the floods; and according to all probability they were constructed by the same Ziad-el-Allah who constructed the Grand Mosque.

The Aissaouia, the guild of fanatics who work themselves up into a state of frenzy and inflict horrible tortures on themselves to acquire merit, have numerous followers in the holy city. A description of one of their services is given in the chapter on cemeteries and religious observances.

The Arab conquerors of North Africa had good reason for making Kairouan their holy city, for its

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foundation in 669 by Okba-ben-Nafa gave them a base beyond the reach of the Emperor's fleets, which enabled them to push forward their conquests and prevent the Mahometan Berbers from reverting to their former religions.

The Mosque of the Barber, the most beautiful building of Kairouan, is situated outside the town above the Reservoirs of the Aghlabites. It is specially remarkable for its interior. Its walls and cupola are entirely decorated with ornamental plaster-work of great beauty. It is like delicate lace. One should make special mention, among the flags which decorate the marabout, of that which was offered by Mustapha-ben-Ismail, favourite and Premier of the Bey Mohamed-es-Sadok, in order to bring about the defeat of the French.

The mosque is so called because Abou-Zemaâ-el-Beloui, one of the Prophet's barbers, is buried here, and with him three hairs of the Prophet's beard—one under his tongue, one next his heart, and one on his right arm. For pilgrims coming at least two or three days' journey, seven pilgrimages to Kairouan count as one to Mecca. In the entrance are niches to hold the pilgrims' saddles.

The first court, containing columns found in the district, is surrounded by rooms for poor students, who are fed and lodged free of charge. This court has a cistern underneath it, and the base of a column

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hollowed out for a well in the centre. The walls in the first vestibule are covered with old faïence, and the ceiling is of carved plaster-work. This leads into the main court, where on one side is the tomb of the founder of the mosque, an Indian prince; and on the opposite side is the Shrine of the Barber, the sarcophagus of which is covered with magnificent embroideries, given by the father of the present Bey.

Hanging on the lattice-work surrounding the tomb are ostrich eggs, charms, and small bags containing earth from Mecca, offerings of the pilgrims. A crystal chandelier hangs in the centre. The ceiling is of tiles and coloured glass, and in one corner stands a book-case containing the volumes of the Koran. This not being technically a mosque, there is no call to prayer from the minaret.

The Mosque of the Swords is dedicated to Sidi Amor Abada, a marabout. The building is in the form of a cross, and is remarkable for its six domes, the interiors of which are decorated with inscriptions from the Koran, as is also the tomb, which is of wood painted green. The marabout employed himself in making enormous sword-blades, and so on, which were forged probably to astonish his contemporaries and maintain his ascendency over them. These he covered with Arabic inscriptions, and on the framework of a carpet-machine

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is to be seen the inscription foretelling the invasion of the French. To the right of the tomb is another smaller one, where lies the body of the marabout's slave. A few yards from this mosque is a court, in which are to be seen four huge iron anchors, which, tradition says, the marabout prophesied to the Bey would be found in Porto Farina. According to the inscriptions on them, they must have belonged to Roman galleys. They are said to have been dragged here by captives, as a punishment.

The Mosque of the Three Gates is one of the oldest in Kairouan, dating from the third century of the Hegira, and the Cufic inscriptions on the façade record the date of its construction. The interior is unimportant, but the exterior is very effective with its chrysanthemum flowers over the hieroglyphics. Visitors are not required to remove their shoes. They only have to refrain from walking on the matting, which is rolled back, leaving a pathway across the mosque.

The Holy Well, so the story goes, is connected with a similar one in Mecca; for many years ago, a pilgrim from Kairouan to Mecca, afraid of robbers, fastened his money in a piece of sacking and tied it round his neck. On his arrival at Mecca he stopped at a well, and in stooping down his wallet fell into the water and sank. On his return home he went to the well to drink, and the first thing he drew up

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was his wallet. The natives, thoroughly believing in the truth of this legend, called the well "Holy," and built a dome over it, setting a camel to work to draw water for a fountain in the street, where the people and animals may always be refreshed. The flow of water has never been known to cease.

The manufacture of carpets at Kairouan has greatly deteriorated. The women make them in their own houses, dyeing the wool themselves, but with artificial dyes, so that the colours are not fast, and quickly fade; but the French Government is taking the matter in hand, and hopes soon to bring back the carpets to their former value.

The inhabitants of Kairouan are very poor and very dirty, the streets ill-kept and smelly, and the souks uninteresting. The Arabs do not look upon one with such a friendly eye as at Tunis, and evidently consider foreigners as intruders and infidels.

Soussa

Soussa, where the line to Kairouan branches off, is a city situated on a wide bay which the art of the engineer has converted into a very safe harbour. Its population is twenty-five thousand, of which twelve hundred are French and five thousand European. The headquarters of a

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"Controle Civil" and a military sub-division, and the seat of a civil tribunal, Soussa possesses also a Museum of Phœnician Antiquities which is justly famous.

The city is built like an amphitheatre on a hill, looking towards the sea, completely surrounded by a turreted wall, flanked with towers and bastions, and offers from a distance a marvellous panorama of white houses, descending in grades from the heights of the Kasbah to the blue waves of the Mediterranean. The enchantment vanishes when you penetrate the town by one of the open gates of the wall. Nevertheless, in ascending the *raidillons* which lead to the high quarter, you discover some beautiful Arab buildings. The GREAT MOSQUE, with its ceilings supported by arcades on piers, deserves attention. As for the Ksar-Erraïs, a sort of stronghold transformed into a *medersa* where some students live, it is probably an ancient Byzantine construction rebuilt in the time of the Aghlabites.

Outside the ramparts, along by the sea, the Europeans have constructed a new town, which is developing rapidly. Wide avenues, promenades planted with trees, a square where military music is played, give this part of Soussa the appearance of a pretty French city. The ancient fishmarket has been transformed into a charming little museum, which, in spite of its very recent creation, possesses already some works

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of art of the highest value—above all, Roman mosaics. The Indian Triumph of Bacchus, the Rape of Ganymede, the Fishers, the Satyrs grouped with Bacchantes, are admirable both as regards colour and design. The great mosaic which covers the floor of the museum in its central part offers a special archæological interest: it represents an Egyptian peasant, a marsh of the delta of the Nile, with numerous fishing and hunting scenes, and on the edges of the marsh are buildings in Alexandrian style, and a number of personages in various attitudes.

One must mention also some sculptures—a bas-relief representing a triumph of colossal dimensions, two child-statuettes, a little Negro in black marble, a bird and a shepherd in the position of the Mannekenpis at Brussels; and lastly, an admirable head in bronze of a young Greek athlete, and some charming terra-cotta statuettes found in a Punic-Roman tomb.

Other Roman antiquities found in executing the military works, in the tombs of the camp, have been brought together in the *salle d'honneur* of the 4th Tirailleurs.

Above all, mention must be made of the two horse-mosaics of the Villa of Sorothus; the panther and the fish, which come from the same villa; and the stucco bas-relief representing a youth hesitating, on coming out of school, between Rome conquered

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and a woman, representing one military life and the other civil life, and the liberal careers.

The CHRISTIAN CATACOMBS, recently discovered, are well worth a visit, though they are in an unfinished state. A short drive outside the town brings one to an olive wood, and a few yards from the road is the entrance, a gateway in the ground with the simple words, "In Pace," between two palms. With the caretaker and a candle leading the way, one descends a few steps to a gallery, from which other galleries lead—a perfect labyrinth. The silence is intense. On the right and on the left are slabs, with occasional inscriptions and designs; otherwise they are quite simple.

A few of the slabs have been replaced with glass, revealing the bones behind; they must have belonged to a tall race, for we measured two, and found one two and a half metres, and the other a little over. At the slightest suspicion of an enemy the Christians filled up the galleries with earth, so that their dead should not be disturbed. During eighteen centuries this earth has sunk, leaving a space of about two feet. These catacombs compare very favourably with those at Rome; they are not quite so deep, but are better ventilated and much lighter. They were dug in limestone and stuccoed.

Soussa was the ancient Hadrumetum founded by the Phœnicians. After the capture of Carthage in

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146 B.C. it became a "libera civitas." Cæsar landed here for his conquest of Africa, and the city was erected into a "colonia" by Trajan. It was the capital of the province of Byzacena. It belonged to the Norman kings of Sicily, and was occupied by the French without resistance in 1881.

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CHAPTER XXIII

OTHER TOWNS TO VISIT IN TUNISIA

TUNISIA, like Algeria, is full of classical remains, but it is not within the province of a light book like this to deal with them in detail. Dougga, Zaghouan, Oudna, Tebourba, Teboursouk, Béja, Le Kef, El-Djem, Mahdia, Thapsus, all have notable Roman ruins; and at Medenine, Matmata, and other places in the extreme south, there are wonderful troglodyte remains.

Dougga is the most important Roman city in Tunisia; it is a sort of Timgad. Here an entire town, the rich and powerful Thugga (the French official Guide is responsible for this name, which does not sound very Roman), has been preserved. The celebrated temple of the six columns, dedicated to Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva, is one of the finest fragments in existence of a Roman temple. The stage of the theatre and most of the seats have been preserved, and the triumphal arch called by the Arabs Bab-el-Roumi, a gate of the base epoch, is scarcely injured.

There is a carefully constructed aqueduct, a Roman

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fortress, and a great mausoleum erected to a Numidian who died before the Christian era. This would have been very perfect if it had not been upset by the clumsy Arabs employed by Sir Thomas Reade, the great English Consul who tried to stop the French grabbing Tunis. He told them to bring him two stones which were built into the mausoleum, and contained the bi-lingual Libyan and Punic inscription which has been so valuable to scholars in telling us what we know about these two languages, and the meaning of the Libyan characters. The monument is still remarkable.

Besides these, there are the remains of Septimius Severus's temple of Saturn, consecrated 195 A.D.; of Thermæ, to the south of the Arab village; of two principal groups of cisterns near the Circus and the Bab-el-Roumi; of the Circus itself on the north *hill*; of the Monument of the Three Doors; of a Roman edifice in the Dar-Sidi-Salah-ben-Lecheb; of a fountain at the south-west; of the great semi-circular monument and the substructure of a rectangular edifice on the middle of it. The excavations of 1894 laid bare an interior gallery surrounding a temple; and, in the west of the city, the uprights of the fallen arch of the eastern gate, about two hundred yards from the great mausoleum.

At Zaghouan, on the mountain of that name, which supplied ancient Carthage as it supplies modern Tunis

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with water, the only ancient monument left in the village itself is the triumphal arch. But about a mile to the south you find the Nymphæum or Temple of the Waters, which the tourist should on no account omit to visit. This monument consists of a sanctuary, at the back of which an altar may be distinguished, and a large niche in which the statue of the god was probably placed.

Oudna, the ancient Uthina, covers an area of more than two miles round. The ruins are very curious, and, from the artistic point of view, among the best which have been discovered in North Africa. Tebourba is a little Arab town with very important Roman remains—an amphitheatre and cisterns; and within a pleasant walk at El-Bathan there is one of the finest Roman remains in North Africa, the celebrated bridge over the Medjerdah. Teboursouk, a curious and very picturesque Arab town perched on the top of a hill, is the starting-point for Dougga. It has a Byzantine citadel constructed from the ruins of earlier buildings, and a triumphal arch. A tablet in the walls gives the name of the Roman city, Tubursicum Bure.

Béja is an entirely Arab town, built on the site, and with the materials, of the Roman Vaga. It is a very curious place, with a wall of the Byzantine period, a big tower belonging to the ancient citadel, a gate with classical features, and the remains of a Roman bath and piscina. It is on the railway.

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Le Kef is the ancient Sicca Veneria, famous in the Mercenary War and in the exile and persecutions of the Christians. It is a typical Arab mountain city, with a citadel and a fortified wall. Various ruins testify to its importance in the Roman and Byzantine epochs, such as those of a temple of Hercules, a Christian basilica, a palace, baths, a fountain, and eleven vast old Roman cisterns. There are also traces in the vicinity of an amphitheatre and a theatre. Sixty-eight kilometres from Le Kef is Maktar, the ancient Maktaris, a veritable mine of antiquities, among which Cook's Guide enumerates a mausoleum in the form of a square tower, a Byzantine basilica, a small amphitheatre, a Roman paved street, a building resembling the Pretorium of Lambèse, a pyramidal mausoleum forty-five feet high, the square-towered mausoleum of Venius, an aqueduct, a temple of Diana and Apollo, and numerous prehistoric megalithic remains.

El-Djem has the finest amphitheatre in Africa, the third in importance in the world. It is just like the Colosseum of Rome. It was built by the Emperor Gordian in the third century. It is over four hundred and fifty feet long by over three hundred and seventy feet wide. Its original height was about a hundred feet; it is still wonderfully lofty and imposing.

Mahdia is the Punic Zella, from which Hannibal

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sailed when he fled from Carthage to his exile. It is very prettily situated on a rocky point. It has a Punic harbour and cemetery and Roman cisterns.

Near Monastir are the ruins of Thapsus, celebrated as the scene of the victory which gave Julius Cæsar North Africa. There are remains of a fortress and an amphitheatre and a group of twenty-five Roman cisterns, each two hundred and fifty feet long.

At Medenine, in the far south, there are cliffs with as many as five stories of houses hewn out of the face of the rock by the troglodytes or cave-dwellers; and at Matmata, also in the south, the inhabitants still use the dwellings of the troglodytes.

Residents in Tunisia consider the beautiful little town of Nabeul the most charming of the watering-places. It is on the railway and has several hotels. Near the neighbouring watering-place of Hamamet are the ruins of the Roman town of Siagu, consisting of baths, an aqueduct, a Byzantine citadel, and a large Christian basilica.

Gafsa is a very picturesque walled town. Its ancient Byzantine citadel has been spoiled by the restoration. It has famous hot springs, and its oasis is the most beautiful in the Sahara. It is the ancient Capsa, destroyed by Marius. It is reached by a light railway from Sfax, and the whole neighbourhood is full of Roman remains.

Gafsa is remarkable for its Sources Vauclusiennes,

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which rise in its Kasbah. They give out a spring of clear water—warm, like all the others of the Djerid. The water is about 86° Fahrenheit and is magnesian in character. Carried outside the Kasbah, it is received into several chambers which form a series of little piscinæ. The other piscinæ are still more curious. They are those of Dar-el-Bey, the Thermil-el-Bey, or Thermæ of the Bey, in the very centre of the town. The water of the artesian well, which forms two large piscinæ, is three or four degrees cooler. These baths are much frequented. The water is beautifully clear, and in its deeper parts, full of fish.

Gafsa has a particularly good market, which has been painted by many artists. The gorges of the Seldja, which are supposed to be as beautiful as those of El-Kantara, may be visited in four or five hours on muleback or taken on the way to Tozeur. Tozeur is an Arab town with very elegant and curious sculptured terra-cotta façades. It has a charming oasis, and is situated eighty-six kilometres from Gafsa.

Gabès, the Tacape of the Romans, at the bottom of the gulf, called by them the Little Syrtis, is considered to have little to recommend it except its oasis.

The Chotts of Southern Tunisia are large lakes, salter than the sea, and often below sea-level, but as a rule very shallow.

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Bizerta need not be described minutely. It stands in the exact corner of the angle of Africa which contains Tunisia, and is almost on a line with Sicily. It has a lake with fifty square miles of deep water, out of which the French are trying to create a rival to Malta; but, unfortunately, it can only be approached by a canal cut through a sandspit.

The new French town contains about thirty thousand people, and, as at Tunis, there is a native town which is very little spoilt. The most interesting feature about it is its proximity to Cato's Utica, now called Bou-Chater, which has the remains of a theatre, amphitheatre, quay, and a Carthaginian palace. Twenty-four miles from Bou-Chater is Porto Farina, once the great winter port of the Tunisian fleets. It was here that Admiral Blake destroyed the navy of the Bey in 1655. Utica and Porta Farina can be taken on a driving tour from Bizerta to Tunis. Bizerta has direct steamers to Marseilles once a week.

Sfax (which means "Cucumbers"), the nearest of the large towns to Hannibal's battlefield of Zama, is the most southerly of the important cities of Tunisia. Its prosperity is the creation of a French joint stock company, which has constructed a first-class port here. During the excavations several Roman ruins were unearthed, such as a large basilica, a baptistry, and mosaics of the Christian period. It

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has now fifty thousand people, of whom five thousand are Europeans, and enjoys the distinction of being the only Tunisian port that stood a bombardment from the French ironclads in 1880. It stands on the site of Roman and Punic cities, and its port is very well sheltered by the Kerkennah islands opposite, which played their part in the story of both Marius and Cæsar. It has a very picturesque Arab city, which no Europeans were allowed to enter till less than a century ago. Its souks are very typical, and it has an ancient mosque with a lofty minaret.

Near Sfax are situated the Terres Sialines, called after their former owners the Siala, which are let to olive-growers, small cultivators who work their gardens themselves. There are more than fifteen hundred thousand olive-trees in this neighbourhood.

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TOURIST INFORMATION

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CHAPTER XXIV

HOW TO GET TO TUNIS

THERE are practically two ways of going to Tunis—from Marseilles or from Sicily. If you are going there from London, the Marseilles route is much the most expeditious. You can go from London to Marseilles in a little over twenty hours by the *train-de-luxe*, and a little under twenty-two hours by the ordinary train. From Marseilles to Tunis, the direct boats of the Compagnie Générale Transatlantique go in twenty-eight hours and a half; but there are other boats of the same line which make a round of the Algerian and Tunisian ports, and take proportionately longer. There are also boats running from Marseilles to Tunis of the Touache, or Compagnie de Messageries Mixtes. They take about two days. Those who dislike the sea prefer the Sicilian route, for the Strait of Messina is but two miles wide where the *train-de-luxe* crosses it, and as landlocked as a river, and the voyage from Trapani to Tunis occupies only fourteen hours, and could very well be done in half the time, as it is but eighty miles.

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The railway journey from London to Palermo can be done in sixty-nine hours by the *train-de-luxe*, and seventy-two hours by the ordinary first and second train. The tourist can go from Palermo to Trapani by rail in a little over five hours if he dreads the sea so much as all that, but most people going to Tunis from Sicily prefer to go on board at Palermo to avoid this tedious journey. From Palermo to Trapani takes an hour more by rail than it does by sea, on account of the enormous detour made by the line.

The Messageries Mixtes steamers ought to go from Palermo to Tunis in about fifteen hours, against the twenty hours taken by the Florio Rubattino boats; but they do not call at Trapani, whereas the Florio spend about six hours of the twenty in port at Trapani. The Messageries Mixtes have the advantage of running their boats through from Palermo to Marseilles *via* Tunis, and can make rebates for the passengers for this particular trip; but their boats are much inferior to the good Florio boats, and Compagnie Transatlantique boats, and if you take a return or circular ticket from London to Paris, their solitary disadvantage disappears, for the Paris, Lyons, and Mediterranean Railway issue exceedingly cheap return tickets direct to Tunis, and even cheaper circular tickets, taking the tourist to Tunis by way of the Algerian ports, and from Tunis by way of Sicily and Italy. The direct prices are as follows:

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TO TUNIS (LA GOULETTE)

		1st class £	s.	d.	2nd class £	s.	d.	Validity in days
Dieppe, Paris, Genoa, Italian steamer	sin.	11	0	6	7	19	6	7
Boulogne or Calais, Paris, as above	sin.	11	17	6	8	10	0	17
Dieppe, Paris, Marseilles, Trans-atlantique s.s.	sin.	9	5	3	6	9	6	...
Havre, Paris, as above	sin.	8	19	9	6	5	6	...
Boulogne or Calais, Paris, as above	sin.	10	2	1	7	0	8	22
Dieppe, Paris, Marseilles, thence by Co. Mixte	sin.	9	4	9	6	4	9	...
	ret.	15	0	6	10	8	6	...
Dieppe, Paris, Marseilles, and Mediterranean Steam Navigation Co.	sin.	8	17	6	5	17	9	15
	ret.	14	13	0	9	18	0	45
Calais, and as above	sin.	9	15	6	6	9	3	15
	ret.	16	2	3	11	0	6	45
From Manchester or London by Prince Line	sin.	9	3	3		...		...

The following are the prices of Cook's circular tours :

		Via Calais or Boulogne, £	s.	d.	Via Dieppe, £	s.	d.
London, Paris, Marseilles, and to Tunis direct, return fare, ticket no. 61	1st	17	3	9	15	16	6
	2nd	12	9	10	11	9	2
London, Paris, Marseilles, Algiers, Kroubs, El Kantara, Biskra, El Guerrah, Constantine, Philippeville, Bona, Tunis, Marseilles, Paris, London, ticket no. 66	1st	21	3	9	19	16	6
	2nd	15	1	10	14	1	2
London, Paris, Marseilles, Tunis, Palermo, Patti, Messina, Reggio, Naples, Rome, Pisa, Genoa, Turin, Modane, Paris, London, ticket no. 151	1st	22	3	9	20	16	5
	2nd	15	9	10	14	9	1
London, Paris, Marseilles, Algiers, Setif, Batna, Biskra, Constantine, Bona, Tunis, Palermo, Syracuse, Catania, Messina, Reggio, Naples, Rome, Pisa, Genoa, Nice, Marseilles, Paris, London, ticket no. 73	1st	27	19	0	26	10	0
	2nd	19	16	0	18	13	9

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In practice most people who wish to economise when it does not interfere with their comfort will strike a mean between the two sets of prices by going second class from London to Dover, and Calais to Marseilles. Messrs. Cook issue tickets second class rail and first class steamer.

From this it will be seen that in twenty hours' rail, from London to Marseilles, and twenty-eight hours' sea, Marseilles to Tunis, you arrive at the Gates of the Orient. I do not say that any one less important than King Edward would be likely to fit the rail and sea journeys into forty-eight hours, and I have had a world of trouble myself and been horribly fleeced in getting from the steamer to the railway at Marseilles in the year of grace 1905, and I cannot say how closely the Transatlantique boats fix their sailings for Tunis in with the arrival of the *train-de-luxe* or the ordinary best train; but the fact remains that in two days' actual travelling you can be at the Gates of the Orient, and that if you are willing to go *via* Dieppe and to put up with second-class steamers as well as second-class trains, you can go to Tunis and back for £11 9 2.

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CHAPTER XXV

WHAT THERE IS TO KODAK IN TUNIS

THE bazar is not a good place for kodaking. As the souks are nearly all under cover, the light is bad; and as most Mahometans object to being photographed, the bazar, where you can do nothing unobserved, offers no opportunity. The few photographable things have been better photographed by Garrigues than any kodaker can hope to photograph them. He has done the bazar pretty exhaustively.

In the Arab streets of the Bab-Souika and El-Djazira Rebats there is much food for the kodaker which the professional photographer has hardly touched. It is difficult to buy photographs of the smaller mosques, or the marabouts' tombs, or the fountains. It is almost impossible to buy photographs of the smaller Arab dwelling-houses in these quarters. You may buy photographs of some shops, such as the rope-sellers', but there are an infinity of curious and photographable shops for the kodaker to make his own.

So much for the fixtures. Now for the life of

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the streets, when the incongruous tramway is not present to spoil incidental traffic. We will consider the kodaker certain on his own initiative to take snapshots of snake-charmers, fortune-tellers, and the people who spread their second-hand stalls on the path. It is not perhaps necessary to suggest that it is well to form as complete a collection as possible of the skittle-shaped Jewesses—mountains of fat; of the second-best Arab women, who hold veils like sails in front of their persons; and of the third-best Arab women, in white, who twist a black scarf round their faces till they look like Negresses. All of these have a strong objection to being photographed.

The Negresses and Bedouin women do not wear veils and do not mind being photographed, though the latter at any rate like being paid for it; while the pretty young Jewesses in the Ghetto positively enjoy it, and make rather good subjects, with their bare arms and throats and neat, bare feet just thrust into clogs almost Japanese in shape. They wear short dressing-jackets and breeches and a blue towel with ends waving in the breeze round their curly hair.

Not many people want to photograph the male Jew, and the male Arab of all conditions resents it, if you take him too openly; but his back view generally makes a far more effective picture than his face, for what you want is his draperies, and, if you want

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to take the faces, nothing is easier than to choose a spot where plenty of Arabs pass, and photograph the building opposite. You only take that building when it is practically obliterated by figures in the foreground, just the right distance to fill your picture.

The Arabs are so elegant, and dress so well and with such variety, that I should have taken a hundred pictures of them if I had stayed long in Tunis. There are the old Abrahams, with white beards and venerable noses, who look as if they had stepped out of the Bible; and the young Absaloms, in rainbow colours with flowers stuck in their ears like a grocer's pencil, to show that they are out to enjoy themselves; and sober business men, in braided cloth suits; and sons of the well-to-do in brocaded caps and waistcoats.

From the kodaker's point of view Jewish men are only badly turned out Arabs.

The patient Berber, with his rough brown camel's-hair clothes and his head hooded in a sack, makes excellent photographs, though he hates it. The best time to catch him is when he has a piano on his back tied to his forehead. He notices nothing then except the people he will run into if they don't get out of his way. He is a splendid person to photograph. There is nothing better in the way of human beings, except perhaps a gang of prisoners in their chains.

In the animal creation a train of camels laden

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with merchandise or produce takes the first place, but it generally comes in when the kodaker and the requisite amount of sun are not about. A donkey weighed down with a huge pannier full of apricots, is not so useful to the kodaker as to the water-colour painter. There are several kinds of picturesque horsemen, if this subject should not rather have been included among human beings, such as the splendid cavalier, magnificently dressed and armed, riding on his white barb, or a man from the desert in one of those straw hats which would hold a family washing.

The fondouks, with their supercilious camels, are also excellent for kodaking. The camels kneel or stand about in the sun with the air of a Scotch member of Parliament, when he rises with his thumbs stuck into the armholes of his waistcoat. The arches and ancient columns which run round the yards make lovely backgrounds.

There is nothing much better to photograph in the whole of Tunis than the weekly spectacle at the mosque of Lella Manouba and the Jewish Sunday at home at Ariana, which, of course, takes place on Saturday afternoon, that being the Jewish Sabbath.

But you have to be extremely circumspect in photographing either. The Jewesses of Ariana have no objection to being photographed, but they are ashamed of being photographed before each other—an illustration of the only kind of public opinion to

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Photo by Garrigues, Tunis.

THE SHIP OF THE DESERT.

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which Jews are amenable. Mr. Arnold White says that it is the Jew's indifference to public opinion which makes him unpatriotic to his adopted country. But the manager of the leading hotel at Ostend made a contrary assertion. He said that if a Jewish family is sitting near another Jewish family with whom they are acquainted, they drink the most expensive champagne ; but if there are no other Jews near them, they drink the cheapest claret. So he always arranged the Jewish families in pairs.

Ariana gives good opportunities for the sly snap-shooter on a Saturday afternoon. It is so full of Jewesses in their outrageous national dress ; and their funny little houses, and their habit of sitting in rows outside them, and the intrusion of male Jews in what appears to their African minds to be the height of Parisian fashion, add much photographical humour.

Photography is even more resented on the road to Lella Manouba, but the muffled-up Arab women who are carrying candles to the tomb of the saint before breakfast on Monday morning, are not so sharp as the Jews disporting themselves on Saturday afternoon, though it would be difficult to take photographs unobserved of the quaint little bits of Arab life which are to be found at the entrance to the saint's tomb—such as antiquated closed carriages with their shutters up, and an Arab, with gold lace and a smoking-cap, on the box, drawn by a couple

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of energetic Arab ponies, which rattle up and disgorge real ladies, so careful not to show their faces and so careless about showing their legs, who always bring their praying-mats with them.

The procession of foot-worshippers is unending. Every now and then the black sail, held at arm's length in front of the body, proclaims one of the exalted rank of a middle-class shopkeeper's wife ; but for the most part they belong to the lower class, who turn their skirts over their heads and wrap black crape scarves round their faces. All carry candles held at the same angle as a fishing-rod, and not a few of them, being country cousins, wear fetter-like anklets.

They all of them walk as if they were what I have called them elsewhere—mere bundles of clothes. The only interest attaches to the young ones who are not yet veiled, or who have been veiled so recently as to be careless about it. If you do see their faces you see nothing attractive except the eyes—the Arab women of Tunis seem totally lacking in the good looks of the men.

The stalls with various kinds of cakes and sweets, and the well with drinking vessels provided for their refreshment, make pretty good kodaks, but not so good as the blind Ethiopians, who keep up a tumtum of music at the foot of the steps leading up to the arch on the brow of the hill through which the pilgrims disappear. If you can secure a position which com-

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mands that arch without being too observable, you have a chance of a prize kodak, for the women do not draw their veils until the moment when they are stepping through the arch, so that you may catch a houri in the act of veiling, framed in a Moorish arch against the clear African sky.

Even in the French city there are a few good kodaks to be made; for example, when you go to take your afternoon tea, or coffee, if you are economically minded, at one of the smart cafés in the Avenue de France. A variety of picturesque Arabs hover round you with things to sell—such as the postcard man, whose ambition must know no bounds. I bought four hundred from one on my last day in Tunis without eliciting either gratitude or surprise. The man who sells Bedouin jewellery, inlaid barber's back-glasses, daggers, and palm-leaf fans is far more picturesque, and some of the burnt-almond sellers have wonderful brass trays. You can get your best photographs of the male Arabs by sitting in the front row of the Café de France. They don't suspect you, and their vanity makes them show off for the benefit of the French ladies. You could make a book without words of kodaks of Arabs in the Avenue de France.

THE END.

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